# JOINT MFS11 EVALUATION BANGLADESH

# NARRATIVE REPORT


Submitted to:
Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research WOTRO Science for Global Development

MAY 2015

The report is the result of a collaboration between three institutions: University of Bath, INTRAC and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

**Research Team**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr Joe Devine | University of Bath, Team Leader, Lead on Strengthening Civil Society Component |
| Dr Zulfiqar Ali | Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Lead on MDGs component |
| Anne Garbutt | INTRAC, Lead on Capacity Development Component |
| **MDG Component** | |
| Zahedul Islam Chowdhury | Research Fellow, BIDS |
| Badrun Nessa Ahmed, | Research Associate, BIDS |
| Iqbal Hossain | Research Associate, BIDS |
| Md. Faizul Islam | Research Officer, MFSII, BIDS |
| Nadia Farnaz | Research Officer, MFSII, BIDS |
| Amzad Hossen | Research Officer, MFSII, BIDS |
| **Capacity Development Component** | |
| Dr Brian Pratt | INTRAC |
| Nigel Simister | INTRAC |
| Sakhawat Hossain | Partners in Health and Development Bangladesh |
| Ashish Dutta | Partners in Health and Development Bangladesh |
| Rozario Chopola | Partners in Health and Development Bangladesh |
| Raisul Islam | Partners in Health and Development Bangladesh |
| **Strengthening Civil Society Component** | |
| Prof Geof Wood | University of Bath |
| Dr Mathilde Maitrot | University of Bath |
| Marie Pierre Arseneault | Independent Consultant, Bangladesh |
| Medhi Rajeb | University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh |
| Emad Rahul | Research Assistant, MFS11, BIDS |
| Rimjin Meherun | Research Assistant, MFS11, BIDS |

## Narrative at Country Level

## 1. Executive Summary

***"Civil society members only offer advice. They are like a cancer on the society. This parasite … the cancer named civil society must be uprooted from the society"***[1]

1. Since its transition to democracy in the early 1990s, Bangladesh has made significant progress in terms of socio-economic development and growth. The country has benefitted from a combination of macroeconomic stability, GDP growth, increased revenues from remittance, continued reductions in levels of poverty and extreme poverty, and notable progress against the majority of Millennium Development Goals targets. Bangladesh is now ranked 142 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index, and the UN has placed it among the 18 countries making the fastest progress in human development.

2. Despite the progress, key challenges remain. The population continues to grow while the land reduces. Recent estimates predict that the county will lose 11% of its land by 2050. Moreover with population growth, the absolute number of people living in poverty and extreme poverty remains very high; inequality continues to rise; the spatial distribution of poverty is uneven; and Bangladesh remains one of the most food insecure countries in the world.

3. More recently however the challenge which causes most concern is Bangladesh's poor record on governance, corruption and the protection of social-political rights. The political environment in Bangladesh is characterised by a partisan and winner takes all mentality; political opposition and dissent is increasingly met with force and violence, and the accountability of duty bearers to citizens is very weak.

4. Bangladesh has a long history of successfully implementing poverty reduction programmes. The Government of Bangladesh supports a large number of social protection programmes, including social safety nets, which are designed specifically to assist the most disadvantaged in society including women, children, the elderly and disabled. During the 2011-2012 financial year, the Government allocated around 14% of the national budget for these programmes.

[1] On 9 February 2015, local media reported that the Food Minister of the Government of Bangladesh had made this statement at a programme in Dhaka. See http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/omg-63877

5. The NGO sector in Bangladesh is one of the most renowned in the world and one of the largest. It is a key player in the task of reducing poverty and enhancing wellbeing, and has been at the forefront globally of innovation in microfinance, group mobilisation, income and employment generation support, and civil society strengthening and action.

6. The relation between Government and NGOs has always been tense and problematic, with periods of outright hostility and mistrust. The NGO sector is accused - mostly by government officials - of being ineffective, inefficient and beholden to donor/international agendas. At the same time, the government is often the target of NGO mobilisation especially in relation to issues around governance, rights and entitlements. The relation between Government and NGOs is further complicated because the latter in particular rely ultimately on political allies and support in order to carry out their activities. Inevitably this means that NGOs are exposed to and have to engage with the imperatives of partisanship and patronage, which underpin the wider political environment.

7. Given its size, the NGO sector is the most visible civil society actor in Bangladesh. Its relation to civil society however is not without tensions. On the one hand, the visibility of the NGO sector has meant that civil society has to some extent been restructured away from an array of indigenous interest groups and is now more associated with a narrower combination of development-orientated objectives such as service delivery, group mobilisation and advocacy. Some argue that this subverts genuine civil society grassroots activism. On the other hand, the NGO sector is accused by other civil society actors of being too close to Government and of competing with each other for external funding. This all creates conflict within civil society and weakens the collective efficacy of the sector.

8. The MFS 11 study covers a two-year period from 2012 to 2014. This has been a particularly turbulent period in Bangladesh's recent history. The country's two main political parties have been locked in a ferocious political battle with the opposition regularly calling a series of strikes, *hartals* and blockades which have led to widespread violence, disruption and instability. The opposition party refused to participate in the 2014 elections, and has since thrown its energy into mobilising a movement to oust the government. This has resulted in increased levels of disruption and violence, and an escalation in the use of state forces to suppress all forms of opposition, often labelling it 'terrorism'. As we submit this report, the situation remains precarious and the future very uncertain.

9. The role of civil society and the room for manoeuvre in this period of turbulence is equally uncertain. Any opposition is perceived as a direct threat, including non-partisan opposition.

The phrase attributed to the Food Minister reproduced at the head of our report gives some indication of the levels of mistrust, antagonism and suspicion.

10. The prevailing political and structural conditions have profound implications for the MFS 11 evaluation, and makes the task of identifying and making sense of casual links between SPO activities and observed outcomes extremely challenging. In short, the scope for effective and impactful SPO activity over the past two years has been very limited. In log frame terms, the right hand 'assumptions' column has overwhelmed the implied causation through a theory of change between inputs, outputs and outcomes.

11. The Netherlands has a long tradition of public support for civilateral development cooperation, going back to the 1960s. The Co-Financing System (*Medefinancieringsstelsel*, or 'MFS') is its most recent expression. MFS II is the 2011-2015 grant framework for Co-Financing Agencies (CFAs), which is directed at achieving a sustainable reduction in poverty and is the successor to MFS I, which covered 2007-2010. A total of 20 consortia of Dutch CFAs have been awarded €1.9 billion in MFS II grants by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFa). The MFS II Evaluation consists of a baseline (2012) and follow up survey (2014) to a) assess the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of development interventions funded by MFS II; b) develop and apply innovative methodologies for the evaluations of development interventions; c) provide justified recommendations that enable Dutch CFAs and/or their Southern partners to draw lessons for future development interventions.

12. The MFS II Evaluation covers three priority results areas: a) MDG achievement, b) Capacity Development and c) Strengthening Civil Society.

13. Over the period under review, MFS II supported just over 60 SPOs in Bangladesh. For our Evaluation, 4 projects were pre-selected for the MDG component, 5 pre-selected for Capacity Development and we selected 16 for Strengthening Civil Society. The selected SPOs capture a range of development interventions, different scales of operation and varying levels of MFS II funding and support.

14. In our evaluation, we have adopted an important distinction, which is applicable to the NGO sector more generally. We therefore distinguish between NGO strategies of intermediation and mobilisation. In the former, NGOs act on behalf of or represent the interests of their respective beneficiaries or clients. This strategy comes into play when NGOs fill gaps in public services. In the mobilization strategy, beneficiaries themselves should have the capacities developed to represent themselves directly. This strategy comes into play when

NGOs aim to compel duty bearers to be more accountable to citizens, i.e. transform political structures. Over time in Bangladesh, NGOs have tended to veer more towards the intermediation strategy, partly because it reflects programme opportunities and partly because mobilisation strategies require more time and resources.

15. For the MDG component, 'before-after', 'project-control comparison', and 'difference-in-differences' methods were used to assess the impacts of the projects. This was complemented by group discussions and individual interviews. Where possible, we adopted control/comparison groups. For the Capacity Development component, our methods were anchored in an intensive case study approach, which consisted of scoring against 5 organisational capabilities and an inductive contribution style analysis, which built on reports of positive and negative impact of SPOs. In the Strengthening Civil Society, we applied CIVICUS scores to all selected SPOs and then focussed on developing 5 'thick case studies' using contribution analysis. In cases where SPOs were selected for more than one of the components, we joined up our analysis.

16. One of the Evaluation's aims was to develop and apply innovative methodologies for the evaluations of development interventions. The MDG component has followed a rigorous control group analysis and adopted standard statistical techniques. Findings were triangulated with qualitative interviews and observations. For the capacity development component, the innovation of the methodology lay in the combination of an inductive organisational assessment and a contribution analysis anchored in impact analysis. Both exercises were highly participatory and involved a wide range of stakeholders. In many ways this approximates a more sophisticated 'most significant change' type approach. The value of the approach is that it can be used at the end of projects but also during project implementation. This form of assessment not only evaluates capacity but in its implementation, actually contributes significantly to capacity development. The Strengthening Civil Society component combined CIVICUS scores and detailed 'thick' case studies. In Bangladesh there are no national CIVICUS studies and therefore it proved difficult to benchmark MFS SPO results. The case studies were built around a contribution analysis approach and proved to be insightful. In particular out attempt to numerically test alternative assumptions was innovative and contributes to the growing literature on 'contribution analysis'. Again the approach was high participatory; and again is agile enough to be implemented during as well as at start/end points of a project. In both capacity development and strengthening civil society components, we successfully incorporated deep qualitative observations in a rigorous, systematic and transparent manner. These approaches could be used in future development interventions assessments.

17. The four projects evaluated under the MDG component all resulted in clear positive changes in the lives and livelihoods of beneficiaries. These positive changes include increased incomes; reduced levels of poverty; improved educational attainment; greater access to sanitation; and higher scores recorded under empowerment of women. Beyond these outcomes, there have also been notable improvements in more sensitive areas such as reduced dowry payments; knowledge around early marriage and pregnancy; awareness of gender equality, as well as the rights and entitlement of young women and girls; and knowledge of sexual reproductive health.

18. Our evaluation of the Capacity Development component resulted in a more mixed picture, and a more difficult one to assess. Whilst on the one hand, there were numerically insignificant changes to the overall aggregate scores of the five capabilities (adapt and renew; act and commit; deliver on development objectives; relate to external stakeholders; achieve coherence), there were some changes for some SPOs in the capabilities' sub-items. Given the short timeframe of the review, this is not an unusual outcome and should not be seen as a negative assessment of MFS II support. Indeed in general we observed good levels of capacity in the SPOs we visited. It is also possible that in some cases, MFS II funding may not have made much of a contribution to this existing capacity. However, our capacity development analysis revealed some interesting observations around 'reverse capacity development' which reinforces the idea of capacity maturity among SPOs, and some provoking insights into the consequences of withdrawing support from SPOs.

19. Achieving observable impact in strengthening civil society is a lengthy process and of course as an outcome, is more likely to be affected by the external environment. In general the CIVICUS scores over the 2012-2014 period show a positive trend, and SPOs demonstrate particular strengths in civic engagement, practice of values and perception of impact. Even in cases where SPOs take risks in pursuit of rights based agendas, the scores are positive. Furthermore SPOs that are more "membership based or membership owned", tend to score higher than other SPOs. This we believe is because the processes of including target groups in analysis and strategy is relatively easier and the costs associated with it are lower. Scores tend to decline or stagnate in cases where funding has either stopped completely or has been reduced significantly. The one average CIVICUS score, which declined was environment. This would initially reinforce our analysis that SPOs are currently operating under hostile conditions. The case studies are rich in detail and in general point to the significance of successfully negotiating with local socio-political in order to implement programmes.

Moreover it is clear that MFS II is supporting some innovative programme developments such as Girl Power which engage with deep structural/cultural inequalities.

20. The assessment was asked to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of development interventions funded by MFS II. The efficiency question referred to the MDG component. We examined efficiency in broad terms, i.e. we assessed whether the intended output had been achieved within the budget and project time frame. We can confirm that all of the SPOs achieved their planned outputs. We are therefore confident to state that the SPOs have been efficient. For the four MDG projects, two (A1 and A4) will only be completed in 2015. It therefore does not make much sense to carry out further efficiency analysis. For project A3, the MFS II budget was very relatively small (around 10%) and the project was complex involving significant social mobilisation ambitions. As such again it did not make much sense to pursue a detailed quantitative efficiency test. For the final project (A2), the project had been completed before the baseline had been carried out. On all MDG projects, we carried rigorous Difference in Difference analysis. These allow us to infer some statistically significant positive outcomes ~~given~~ despite the short span of evaluation period in question, which in turn allow us to indicate that outputs have been effective. Our best analysis of the efficiency of the capacity development and strengthening civil society components is that in general there is good evidence of progress towards planned outputs or that planned outputs have been achieved. On the whole, we consider this level of progress positive. It is of course impossible to make any summary statement about the relevance of the different SPO interventions. The range of activities supported through MFS II is quite broad and there are a large number of SPOs supported. All of the projects we assessed, seem to be well connected to a MDG theme, and there is a mixture of more 'traditional' activities (support for livelihoods) with more innovative ones (Girl Power). Many of the latter in particular could be considered 'path breaking' in Bangladesh.

21. Finally the review was also asked to provide justified recommendations that enable Dutch CFAs and/or their Southern partners to draw lessons for future development interventions. Specific recommendations appear in the technical papers and so we confine ourselves here to some broader observations

    I. Given the political landscape in which SPOs have had to operate over the past two years, the fact that they have achieved positive results in all three components is an indication of effectiveness, resilience and innovation. In general, we observed positive results for SPOs adopting intermediation as well as mobilisation strategies in delivering planned outputs. Almost all sectors in Bangladesh have suffered as

result of the ongoing political tensions and turmoil. The NGO sector is not immune to the same setbacks and frustrations, and it is therefore to their credit that they have been able to operate successfully.

II. The nature of the CFA-SPO relationship and the levels of funding commitments have a strong influence upon the SPOs and their capacity to achieve expected outcomes. Here, we argue, lies a core problem of donor resolve and morality – a problem which was brought home to us during the evaluation. SPOs in Bangladesh take far greater and higher risks than donors. Where long term stability and support are not signalled, SPOs are exposed and the effectiveness of any development investment is jeopardised. One clear recommendation therefore is that partnerships with SPOs need to be long-term. This does not preclude performance assessments but does imply a commitment which will enable meaningful capacity development and strengthening civil society.

III. We have attempted to engage directly with the question of attribution. In social sciences, this is a complex and challenging question. In Bangladesh, the funding support to SPOs is in some cases relatively modest. Moreover in many cases, MFS II offers modest support to quite mature SPOs with large programmes and long standing histories of successfully implementing development projects. In cases when either or both of these conditions occur, tracing impact and asserting attribution are complex tasks. We observed in too many cases, that project design was carried out without thinking sufficiently about impact monitoring. As a result we are convinced that the fuller impacts of some implemented projects are not captured. We would recommend that impact considerations are fully embedded into project design and that this takes place at the very start of any project proposal – and certainly before the project starts.

IV. The observation that the MFS II portfolio in Bangladesh consists of relatively modest amounts of funding provided to mature SPOs with established project portfolios, leads to a second more strategic decision about whether future investments should be ‘spread thinly’ or ‘concentrated’ in fewer areas of intervention. On the one hand, by spreading thinly and investing in established large programmes, MFS II has in some regards ‘picked good winners’. On the other hand, the contribution of MFS II in impact terms is not always easy to discern. We do not feel in a position to make specific recommendations in this

regard but feel it is a key strategic decision which requires deliberate consideration in the future.

V. Dutch CFAs have a very good reputation in Bangladesh and are seen as effective development partners. For this reason perhaps, and at a very general level, we observed that the SPO projects were well designed, relevant to country context, and in some cases very innovative.

VI. We observed a range of practices in terms of the quality of the relationship between CFAs and SPOs, with examples of excellent collaboration but also of poor communication and weaker partnership. The structure which brings CFAs together in alliances can allow for a sharper development focus around core priority themes and as such, can enhance mutual learning and development effectiveness. We have been able to observe this in our Evaluation. The alliance structure can also however become quite messy with partners in Bangladesh not entirely clear about lines of communication, mutual obligations and ultimately accountability.

VII. The commitment to MDG delivery, capacity development and strengthening civil society meant that in principle, there were three separate streams of funds to support activities pertaining to the three components. In most cases this did not happen in reality. Often funding for capacity development and strengthening civil society were subsumed under other activities or funding streams. In the end it was not possible to separate the three components out. In the future, if there is a commitment to a number of results priority areas, it is important from the outset to have greater clarity about the funding of each priority. This is especially relevant when relatively modest amounts of funding are provided.

VIII. There is an expectation that SPOs 'owned' their theories of change and were familiar with the logical connections between inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. In too many cases, we observed that SPOs were not clear about theories of change, and were not able to clarify relations between MFS II funding, CFA involvement and the development/articulation of their theories of change. This is not a criticism of the SPOs but an argument which reinforces the need for greater support for capacity development.

IX. The commitment to strengthening civil society is a key component of MFS II. We were however surprised at how little there was in terms of training or capacity

building in this regard. This is an area where CFAs actually have expertise and it is an area where the alliance structure might well be suited. We would recommend that in the future, more attention is given to building capacity to strengthen civil society.

X. Finally, we want to end with a summary statement. We have observed that longer term relationships and partnerships lead to more effective outcomes and satisfaction. We observed this even in cases where long term partnership came with reduced financial commitments. It is important, in attribution terms, to capture the effects of these longer-term commitments and partnerships. **In our view: the overall MFS11 objective of strengthening civil society as a building block for structural poverty reduction is best served through long-term, regular and flexible support for SPOs.** In our evaluation we have seen that CFAs are in a strong position to deliver on this.

## 2. Relevant Country Context

***"Civil society members only offer advice. They are like a cancer on the society. This parasite … the cancer named civil society must be uprooted from the society"***[2]

### *2.1 Introduction*

The Baseline report offered a summary of context for that time (2012) which was more descriptive than analytical. For this final report, a more analytical approach is expected in order to understand the 'space' or 'room for manoeuvre' for civil society to flourish with the support of international donors like the Dutch government, through their network of CFAs. In 'logframe' terms, this might be considered as the 'assumptions' column, which frames the prospects of outputs leading towards preferred or intended outcomes.

In important respects, the context for civil society in Bangladesh has changed significantly even in the two year research period 2012-14. The political context has changed dramatically and will continue to shape the next 4 years, but with uncertain outcomes (see later part of this context section). Let us first revisit the longer term context within which more recent changes have occurred. This involves reminding the reader of some of the trend analysis in the earlier baseline report.

Bangladesh has a population of about 150 million with an area of only 144,000 square kilometres which makes the country the most densely populated country in the world barring a few small city states like Singapore. The Bangladesh economy has experienced both macroeconomic stability and modest economic growth following its transition to a democratic process in the early 1990s. The economy registered an average GDP growth of around 6 per cent in recent years (Table 1). However, the rate of inflation has gone up to the level of two digits in recent times, affecting lives and livelihoods, particularly of the poor and the vulnerable.

The incidence of poverty (including moderate and extreme poverty) has declined in Bangladesh over the past several years (Table 2). As the estimates indicate, income poverty has declined from 56.6% in 1991-92 to 40.0% in 2005 and 31.5% in 2010. Similarly, extreme poverty has also declined substantially during the same period. However, nearly one-third of

[2] On 9 February 2015, local media reported that the Food Minister of the Government of Bangladesh had made this statement at a programme in Dhaka. See http://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/omg-63877

the population of 150 million people in Bangladesh still lives below the national poverty line and extreme poverty remains at 17%, according to the 2010 Bangladesh Household Income Expenditure Survey (BBS 2010). With such a high incidence of poverty, the government as well as non-government organizations and development partners are active in implementing various anti-poverty and social programs to help the poor and the poorest.

### *2.2 Macro-economic stability, MDG progress and challenges*

Nevertheless, Bangladesh has huge potential and has consistently managed strong growth rates over the last 10-15 years. In our 2012 report, we referred to some exciting indicators of this potential including Goldman Sachs listing Bangladesh in their 'Next 11' economies (DFID 2011); and the World Bank's *Ease of Doing Business Survey* ranking Bangladesh 122nd out of 183 countries, and 5th of the 8 south Asia countries (World Bank 2012). The *Doing Business* 2015 data for Bangladesh is not so positive. It falls to 176th place out of 189 economies and is now 7th of the 8 South Asian countries. (World Bank 2015). Over the years this ranking has been gradually deteriorating: 110 in 2009 to 118 in 2011 to 122 in 2011. The cost of starting a business, problems associated with construction permits and protecting investors are all areas which cause concern. According to the 2012 Index of Economic Freedom, Bangladesh's poor business environment is undermined by a corrupt and inefficient regulatory regime which is heavily politicised (Heritage Foundation 2012).

Foreign investments remain relatively low but on the rise with success in the garment, jute, leather, frozen fish and seafood sectors. Revenues from remittances are highly significant. In 2011 they constituted 10% of GDP, and according to 2012-2015 data from the Bank of Bangladesh, they continue to increase, exceeding many foreign exchange inflows, including official development assistance and net earnings from exports. Present levels of political disputation and violence will likely act as a depressor on this potential.

Broad-based private sector led growth and macroeconomic stability have enabled Bangladesh to make considerable development progress. It is ranked 142 out of 187 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index, up 4 places since 2011 and representing between 65% and 70% change against its comparable 1980 value. The general consensus is that Bangladesh has met MDG1 of halving extreme poverty by 2015; MDG2 on universal primary education has been achieved even if drop-out rates remain high; MDG 3 on gender parity in education is well on track; and infant mortality has declined significantly.

However there remain key challenges:

- The population continues to grow while land reduces. With a projected 0.5 metre rise in sea levels, Bangladesh is likely to lose 11 % of its land by 2050 (UNDP 2011);
- High levels of poverty persist with 32% of the population classified as poor, and 17% classified as extreme poor (BBS 2010);
- The country has not performed well in redressing inequality. In 2010, the inequality of per-capita income stood at 0.458, in 2005 it was 0.467. This is likely to impact Bangladesh society as it moves to Middle Income Country status;
- The spatial distribution of poverty is uneven and highly significant (BBS 2009, Ali 2009);
- Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and already experiences the negative impacts of climate change. The fourth IPPC Assessment report predicts significant increases in flooding and droughts in the future;
- Continuing political turmoil involving widespread disruptions to economic activity.

### *2.3 Agriculture and Food Security*

While the overall contribution of the agricultural sector to the national economy has fallen as the industrial, construction and service sectors have grown, its overall significance should not be underestimated. The sector remains extremely important for ensuring food security and because it engages around 65% of the country's workforce. The World Bank Poverty Assessment Report 2000-2010 (2012) attributes the greater proportion of poverty reduction to agricultural labour and recent rises in real wage rates. Although Bangladesh has significantly increased its domestic food production, inadequate food access remains a major problem. Thus Bangladesh remains a highly food insecure country and is ranked 70$^{th}$ out of 81 countries in the 2011 Global Hunger Index (IFPRI 2011), with 16% of the population classified as undernourished (FAO *et al* 2010). Incidences of food insecurity are not evenly spread across the population and reflect social and cultural norms. Thus higher levels of underweight, stunting, wasting and anaemia deficiency are found consistently among women, adolescent girls and young children. A key uncertainty in current food security assessments is the impact of the latest round of food price increases.

### *2.4 Tracking social indicators[3] and MDGs*

Bangladesh is a signatory to the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit held in September 2000 along with 189 nations. The Summit adopted eight specific goals, known as

[3] Most of the studies published in the last 2 years report on official data available up to 2010. This is when Bangladesh published its last Household Income and Expenditure Survey.

'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs), for human development and poverty reduction. The government also prepared earlier the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and a sixth Five Year Plan with the primary objective of reducing poverty by half by 2015. The government is committed to bring about changes in the social development of the poor that goes much beyond meeting material needs alone.

Current status and changes over time (1990 to 2007/10) of selected social indicators in Bangladesh are presented in Table 3. **Child nutritional status** reveals that a high proportion of children in the country are currently suffering from malnutrition. It is true for both the measures of underweight (41%) and stunted (43%). In both measures, rural children are lagging far behind than their urban counterparts. Trends however show improvement for both underweight and stunted children over the same period. The percentage of children underweight has declined from 68 in 1990 to 41 in 2010. Likewise, the percentage of children stunted has declined from 64 to 43 during the same period.

The **mortality indicators** have improved over the last 2 decades though they are still fairly high. Under-five Mortality has declined from 151 in 1990 to 73 in 2010. Infant mortality has also declined from 94 to 41 during the same period. Access to safe drinking water is satisfactory at its current state (97.8). However, arsenic contamination is now a great threat to safe water and therefore the definition of access to 'safe water' needs to be reviewed and re-estimated given the arsenic contamination in the water. Only about 54.1% of the total population has access to a sanitary toilet is still very poor.

Bangladesh has invested considerably in its **health sector** and this has contributed to some success in relation to MDGS 4, 5 and 6. Over the last decade, approximately 3.2% of GDP has been spent on health and the per capita health expenditure is US$ 12 (GoB 2009). One of the main challenges remains the scarcity of health professionals especially nurses; and where capacity exists, it is significantly biased to urban centres. Government sources have acknowledged the inequity in health care expenditure with the poorest spending less on health; as well as the spatially unequal distribution of health provision (GoB 2009). Nevertheless, Bangladesh is on track to meet the under-five and infant mortality and children's immunization MDG targets, although the former will be impacted if children's malnutrition rates deteriorate. There has always been serious concerns about Bangladesh' track-record on improving maternal health. A recent survey however shows progress over the last decade, giving rise to cautious optimism (GoB 2010). While there is also evidence of reductions in prevalence of TB and malaria, it is clear that this MDG remains a challenge.

There appears to be a rise in dengue fever, with debilitating consequences especially after first onset.

Though the **literacy rate** has increased from 32.4% in 1990 to 57.91% in 2010, it is still fairly low compared to other developing countries. While male literacy remains higher than for females, the rate of progress of female literacy is much higher implying convergence between the two in this respect. Net primary school enrolment has also improved significantly over the last decade. While the net primary enrolment was 60 in 1990, it was about 85 in 2010. There is little difference between boys and girls in this respect, with girls' enrolment now just higher than for boys. Increasing attention is now focussing on 'schooling' (i.e. quality) as opposed to 'enrolment'. In this, Bangladesh's performance is not as strong.

The HDR 2013 results for g**ender equity** in Bangladesh are especially encouraging with new maternal mortality rates indicating significant improvements on its Gender Inequality Index. This puts Bangladesh among the strongest improving countries in terms of ensuring equity for women. Bangladesh however remains a highly patriarchal society, resulting in considerable gender gaps in almost all development indicators, discrimination at all levels of society, and constraints for women accessing/ controlling resources that would reduce their vulnerability. Women have low levels of protection in the family as they do not have equal rights in marriage, divorce, guardianship, custody or inheritance. Women in Bangladesh also have low levels of physical protection, with violence against women being a common but largely under-reported occurrence. Early marriages and dowry practices are major factors in domestic violence, and there are increasing reports of sexual harassment, rape and assault occurring in work places and institutional settings. The number of reported cases of acid throwing has also been increasing at an alarming rate. Traditional norms and social practices place further constraints on women's participation in activities outside of the home. Although the Constitution affirms equal rights, local norms bear strongly on the ability of women to access employment and education opportunities, and to take on visible or public roles either in politics or in business.

### *2.5 Social Protection*

Bangladesh has a long history of implementation of anti-poverty programmes. Rural Public Works Programmes (RPWP) has been an important policy instrument for the government since the early 1960s to augment employment and income of the rural poor during the lean agricultural season. It has been in operation in one form or other with varying degrees of emphasis for a long time. These have morphed into several other programmes including the

Food for Work (FFW), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), construction and maintenance of rural infrastructure, directed at generating employment opportunities for the rural poor.

The government is currently implementing over 100 different social protection programmes (including social safety nets) through 24 different ministries/departments in order to support the disadvantaged people including women, children, elderly, and disabled. These programs include: cash transfer programs; food security programs; micro credit for self-employment; and funds for poverty alleviation. In order to support these programmes, an allocation of nearly Tk.226 billion was made in the financial year 2011-12, which accounts for about 14 % of the national budget and 2.5% of the country's GDP. Some of the important cash transfer programs include: 100 days employment generation scheme, old age allowance, widow allowance, disability allowance. Major food assistance programs include: Food for Work, VGD, Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), and others. There are also other conditional cash transfer programmes especially connected to the expansion of education and primary school enrolment. Both government and the NGO sector are involved in such CCTs.

Various studies point out that the existing social safety net programs (SSNs) in Bangladesh provide limited coverage which cannot cope with the magnitude of extreme poverty and marginality that exists in the country. The SSNs cover about 15 million people – well short of the 24 million people who belong to the 'extreme poor' category. Furthermore, the SSNs cover mostly the rural poor, whereas the number of urban extreme poor is also large and the nature of urban poverty is more severe than rural poverty in certain respects. This plethora of programmes is currently under review with the intention of streamlining and targeting them more precisely upon the poor.

### *2.6 Anti-poverty: the rationale for NGOs*

The NGO sector in Bangladesh is famous worldwide for its involvement in poverty reduction programmes particularly through microfinance, group mobilisation and income and employment generation support. While it is true, as noted above, that local government structures provide social safety net schemes, these are easily distorted in their purpose through capture by local elites using funds for patronage. With Bangladesh's poor record on governance, corruption, social and political rights, alongside intense need and historical dependence upon donors, development NGOs (e.g. the SPOs of the CFAs supported by the Dutch aid programme) have an anti-poverty stance as their major rationale for existence, attracting donor support as a means to avoid aid being misused by successive unaccountable

governments. Hence the relation between government and NGOs has always been inherently tense and problematic (see below). Ironically, development NGOs have usually prospered better under military and technocratic regimes than democratic ones as the former regimes have needed legitimation outside party politics and mechanisms to reach out to the countryside, and more latterly urban slums.

### *2.7 Socio-political context for civil society*

Since its independence, Bangladesh has experienced a dramatic transition from a predominantly agrarian society, characterised by patron-client relations comprising landlords, tenants and high proportion of landless labourers. While remaining predominantly rural, it now has a few large urban centres, with the capital, Dhaka, reaching mega-city status, accompanied by an increasing density of infrastructure through road networks which link the countryside to cities, and economic activity to ports and exports (especially through the rapid rise of the garments industry). However, Bangladesh retains a poor record on governance, corruption (ranked second by Transparency International), social and political rights. Accountability of duty bearers to citizens is very weak. Its organisational culture is dominated by 'deep structures' derived from its recent agrarian past (see Wood 2000, 2011, 2012). Large kinship groups straddle government and private sectors, with an element of rotation as incumbent governing political parties are voted out of office. Official decisions cannot be protected from private interests, with many appointments and transactions hidden from view.

Civil society organisations are as embedded as other institutions (government and private) in the social imperatives of these deeper structures, needing to honour expectations and obligations from within large kin groupings and friendship networks. Civil society organisations thus have a major challenge in confronting problems of governance, rights and entitlements, when they themselves can be shown to be contaminated. However, beneath this general picture, the experience is varied, with some NGOs professionalising their activities and practices often at the behest of their international donors. They are subject to regular audit and review where problems are exposed. They have received advice and training in their own recruitment practices and MIS, as well as M&E (capacity building). Thus in the NGO sector more specifically, there remain some strong examples of success, alongside examples of failure and collapse, as deep structures have effectively captured their mission.

The capacity of government to regulate the sector, for example through the NGO Affairs Bureau, is undermined and de-legitimated by corruption at the highest levels of government itself. This leaves a fundamental problem in society regarding the accountability of NGOs.

The better funded and operationally significant NGOs have thus tended to be more accountable to their donors than to their clients or other members of Bangladesh society (Devine 2006, 2009). This has been a source of great resentment among politicians, who perceive NGOs as loose cannons without statutory responsibilities. Even 'successful' NGOs struggle against this criticism and therefore need political allies and friends, which draws them into the deep structures problem. There is, therefore, fluidity in state-civil society relationships in Bangladesh, especially with the 'sub-sector' of development NGOs. While a few may be sufficiently large, like BRAC, to be able to manage these aspects of the hostile environment, especially as some politicians seek legitimacy through association, the majority, often regional and local ones, face a daily contestation of principles and values between the clashing expectations of deep structures and internationally set standards of professionalism. The SPOs supported by Dutch aid via CFAs fall into this category.

Bangladesh has had a relatively short and turbulent political history, but also a rich history of civil society organization and activity including village based co-operatives, religious organizations, business associations, professional groups, trade unions, peasant organizations, student groups and the media). However it is the NGO sector which has come to dominate recent discussions on civil society. NGOs have operated in Bangladesh since Independence in 1971, but over the last 30 years have grown dramatically due to the influence and support of foreign aid and the limited success of the government to reduce poverty and provide social services (Devine 2003). Today there are over 26,000 legally registered NGOs in Bangladesh, making it one of the largest NGO sectors in the world. Most of these are local and voluntary, but some have multi-million pound budgets and manage large commercial ventures.

Since the early 1980s, development oriented NGOs in Bangladesh, significantly funded by external donors, have re-structured civil society away from a more indigenous array of professional, labour union, peasant association and other sectional interest groups which previously negotiated with the state within a corporatist framework. Southern Partner Organisations-SPOs [4](in MFS11 language) have, in effect, re-defined civil society towards a combination of service delivery, social mobilisation, lobbying and advocacy wherein educated activists (increasingly professionalised) have mobilised resources to act on behalf of poor clients towards government (in terms of rights and entitlements) and policy choices (in terms of public resource distribution).

[4] SPO is an unfamiliar term in Bangladesh and people refer much more to NGO. To be consistent with the MFS II language we will use SPO when relevant/possible to refer to the NGO activities funded by MFSII. Outside of this we use the term NGO as it is broadly understood in Bangladesh.

Some nationalist critiques of this process have argued that these externally funded SPOs are, in effect, crowding out more indigenous forms of social capital, by introducing a Western 'de Tocquevillian' agenda in which civil society acts as a corrective to the inherent unaccountability of the state. This agenda constructs civil society more in terms of **mobilisation**, advocacy and lobbying. More especially in Muslim Bangladesh, an inclusive notion of '*ummah*' offers an ontological alternative by seeing the domains of state and civil society as permeable, rather than separated, in which civil society is constructed more in terms of **intermediation**, through service delivery. Over the years, there has been a general shift within the NGO community from mobilisation to intermediation (Devine 2003). From a western, liberal-democratic, pluralist perspective, Bangladesh certainly has a poor record on governance, accountability, corruption, social and political rights in which elites 'police' a limited access (see North, Wallis and Weingast 2009, Wood 2012, Wood 2014) of ordinary people to state mobilised resources and privileges.

Thus, while Bangladesh is perceived as a world leader for its NGO sector involvement in poverty reduction programmes, the sector also attracts hostility from some elites and political leaders in national and local government when it moves beyond services into wider civil society strengthening, and especially so in sensitive MDG issues like gender, maternal rights as well as governance and broader rights based agendas like AOSED and SUPRO. While the country shows significant improvement in the Gender Equality Index, especially through the maternal mortality MDG, Bangladesh remains a highly patriarchal society, resulting in considerable gender gaps in almost all development indicators, including low levels of protection within their own families.

Civil society activity in Bangladesh operates in a hostile political environment characterized by partisanship, patronage, corruption, and a winner-takes-all mentality. The major political parties provide an arena for elite competition via patronage distribution (Wood 2012). Civil society activity is not autonomous from this political culture, and the most significant civil society organizations (labour unions, student groups, business communities, trade unions, lawyers, doctors and the press) are all internally split according to their political affiliations (Devine 2010). This creates conflict within civil society, as well as between civil society and the state. Co-opted in this way, the governance potential of civil society activities is significantly reduced.

Within civil society, NGOs are exposed to higher levels of suspicion because they have access to external resources, and are associated with' international agendas'. As the NGO

sector has grown, questions about their transparency, accountability and effectiveness have intensified. The relation between government and NGOs is inherently tense. NGOs operate in over 80% of rural villages and are present in most urban centres. Their development activities directly benefit over 35% of the entire population and in some cases, the NGO sector overshadows government departments. For some, the fact that NGOs successfully provide core social services is positive and contributes to the development aims of the government. However others argue that reliance on NGOs encourages the creation of a 'franchised parallel state' (Wood 1997); and that contrary to popular belief, NGOs are less effective than government in delivering social services (Chowdhury and Mukhopadhaya 2011). A more nuanced analysis suggests that NGO command over resources and their membership base make them an easy target for partisan co-optation (Devine 2010).

In this context, SPOs have to make a calculation about where on a continuum between philanthropic services and engineering structural and value change they wish to place themselves. Sexual reproductive health offers a particular challenge in this respect—see, for example, the SPO cases of BNWLA and DSK.

While for some SPOs, this is an either/or choice, for others an engagement in service delivery also offers a legitimacy to participate more radically and critically in a mobilisation agenda to add to a stronger societal demand for good governance and the implementation of statutory rights, free of the rent seeking behaviour of government officials. The SPOs selected for this study represent a range of stances, though all: address some of the MDGs; have a need to strengthen their own capacities; and to varying extent engage in civil society strengthening. But they vary in other ways, as they face other contextual dilemmas. A key distinction exists between the strategies of intermediation and mobilisation. **Intermediation** entails a representation of the interests of poor, uneducated, illiterate and socially isolated clients by SPO personnel acting on behalf of those clients (sometimes through the creation of networks of intermediary CSOs) and engaged in direct service delivery. **Mobilisation** is based more upon the idea that such poor clients should have their capacities developed to represent themselves directly. Of course, a 'mobilising' NGO finds it difficult to stand back to allow that to happen, so that intermediation can happen by default. (Unfortunately the CIVICUS indicators tend to blur this important strategic distinction in the civil society strengthening process.)

SPOs themselves are not insulated from prevailing cultural norms and organisational practices and thus not liberated to pursue an unambiguous de Tocquevillian agenda. They are embedded as other institutions (government and private) within the social imperatives arising

from the deep structures derived from the country's recent agrarian past, needing to honour expectations and obligations from within large kin groupings and friendship networks. Developing a professional capacity to act independently of these norms alongside the relative autonomy offered by external donor funds provides some room for manoeuvre while also attracting criticism for bringing foreign values and funds into a domestic political process. They are also increasingly perceived as non-accountable domestically (just like government!), subject only to review by donor funders. This has prompted increasing attempts by government to regulate the sector, for example through the NGO Affairs Bureau (NAB), though it is not clear whether this option to 'license' the sector simply adds to rent seeking opportunities. A very recent development is the creation of an NGO Commission, located above the NAB in the government structure. This is viewed by many as opening up further possibilities for rent-seeking by government officials and their political leaders. More locally and perhaps informally, local actors take advantage of the 'sanctioning power' of institutions such as the NAB and the NGO Commission. It is therefore now more common to hear of reports of NGOs worried that local elite might arbitrarily submit reports to authorities, which have no material foundation but could have potentially irretrievable damage.

The relation between NGOs and other civil society organizations also generates tension. The private sector sees NGOs as market rivals, progressive forces see them as subverting genuine grassroots activism, and conservative forces are wary of the progressive elements of NGO work. NGOs have been accused of 'crowding-out' and ignoring other civil society organizations. Meaningful alliances between NGOs and civil society actors are very few and sporadic. Furthermore NGOs compete with each other and rivalry is not uncommon. This weakens the scope for creating greater impact. There is therefore fluidity in state-civil society relations, especially in respect of externally funded NGOs. The continuing political attack upon the Grameen Bank (not strictly an NGO but certainly a significant civil society institution) is evidence of this tension. To offset this dangerous exposure, CSOs in Bangladesh beyond NGOs (labour unions, student groups, business communities and the press) are all vulnerable to political capture, and all are internally split according to their political affiliations between the two main competing parties (or sets of elites). Thus development NGOs (i.e. SPOs of MFS11) with their command over resources and membership base are also easy targets for partisan co-optation. This can be reinforced by the internal competition between NGOs, sometimes in the quest for external funding, which further weakens the collective efficacy of the sector to pursue MDGs and civil society strengthening.

### *2.8 State and Civil Society during the MFS 11 Study Period*

The precise political conditions of the 2 year study period (2012-14) represent a particular stage in the turbulent history of the country, with its roots in the heritage of liberation from Pakistan over 40 years ago. The present ruling party, Awami League, considers itself to be the true movement of liberation. That struggle importantly emphasised the ethnicity of Bengalis and secular democratic conditions in contrast to the political use of Islam to transcend the real nationalist divide between West and East Pakistan following the Partition of India. But the material conditions of liberation entailed a destroyed infrastructure, a decimated intellectual leadership, a famine and thus widespread poverty leading to uncontrollable anarchy in the countryside. The attempt to manage that situation through the formation of a de facto one-party state (the BAKSAL coalition led by the Awami League in a form of executive presidential rule) in January 1975 resulted in a series of violent coups and counter coups between August-November 1975, before the martial law regime of General Zia Rahman emerged. He had been leader of the militia loyal to Bangladesh independence as part of the land invasion by India troops, which liberated the country from the occupying Pakistan forces. This potted history is necessary, because to legitimise his regime, he formed the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). After his assassination in May 1981, General Muhammed Ershad led the successor military regime, himself in turn forming the Jatiyo Party to legitimate his regime. Thus in the successful struggle against the Ershad regime in December 1990, there were two main parties: Awami League and BNP. These contested the elections in February 1991 with a surprise victory of BNP. After a personal period in jail, Ershad and his party re-emerged in subsequent elections, mainly propping up the Awami League. At the end of the BNP government (2001-6) there was sufficient internal political chaos (violence and political murders between the contending parties) to prompt a military coup and a 2 year interim, bureaucratic 'caretaker' government supported by the military. The elections in 2008, held under interim government electoral supervision, produced a comfortable win for the Awami League. But towards the end of this term of office (2012), the ruling Awami League used its large majority in the *Jatiyo Sangsad* (Parliament) to pass a constitutional amendment abolishing the principle of 3 month interim governments neutrally supervising elections, to be applied to the January 2014 election. The BNP struggled against this amendment throughout the study period (2102-14). Powerless in the Parliament, it took its struggle again to the streets with *hartals* and blockades, resulting in both sides indulging in violence through bombs and murders of opposing party officials. The BNP refused to contend the January 2014 election, resulting in a broadly uncontested overwhelming 'victory' for the Awami League. It has since justified this 'democratic coup' as a necessary defence against anti-nationalist, pro-Islamic fundamentalist, anti-secular forces, arguing that the BNP is essentially a front for these conservative forces, citing evidence of its previous coalitions with the Jamaat-e-Islami

party. As the first year of this government was ‘celebrated’ and ‘contested’ during January 2015, resulting a resurgence of violence, widespread disruption and continuing instability, entailing an escalation in the use of state forces to suppress opposition, labelling it as ‘terrorism’.

It has been remarkable that progress on MDG indicators has occurred at all during this period, and that a policy momentum towards the eradication of extreme poverty has been sustained. Other economic indicators have also just remained generally positive (inflation, real wages, remittance flows, inward investment and so on). However the recent political eruptions, on top of those during 2012 and 2013, reveal the precarious condition of the society. The quote cited at the top of our reports attributed to the Food Minster is indicative of the situation facing civil society actors in general.

For civil society activity, and crucially for this study, it means that any causal link between an SPO’s capacity (as measured by the 5 capabilities, see below) and civil society strengthening (as measured by the CIVICUS indicators, see below) is severed by the extreme ‘noise’ offered by this recent history of disruptive politics since 2012. This happens in several ways. **First**, in its nervousness about opposition threats, the ruling party in the state has significantly closed down space for most of civil society activity, except that sanctioned or supported by the ruling party. This applies to the media, to public meetings, to access to politicians and government officials, to donor led forums and so on. There are spies everywhere, and arbitrary arrests and some disappearances at the hands of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB). Thus risks of ‘normal’ civil society mobilisation are high. **Second**, NGOs in general and the SPOs of MFS II find it difficult to prevent their campaigning and lobbying activity from being perceived as taking a ‘for or against’ political position in relation to the main contending parties. While this may be more of an immediate problem in relation to the present ruling party, everyone in Bangladesh is aware that things change, coups can happen, open elections become possible with anti-incumbent voting. In such a multi-period game, taking overt positions even against the opposition may backfire, so NGOs and other parts of civil society shy away from overt positions at all. This drives them towards more technocratic performance, towards more intermediation service delivery roles, trying to stay as uncontroversial as possible. There is also a fear that ‘false accusations’ quickly result in SPOs being closed down altogether, and donors withdrawing their support. **Third**, under these conditions of mutual suspicion, civil society organisations are highly vulnerable to political capture. It is exceedingly difficult to steer a political neutral course. And if organisations are genuinely seeking to be neutral, then political parties set up their own front organisations in these sectors to crowd out the ones they cannot control. Student movements are the most

famously captured in these ways and rely heavily upon the patronage and protection of a parent political party. Of course, at present, only one party is calling the major shots, as it were. However to repeat, anyone with experience of Bangladesh sees the multi-period game. But the dangers of a single ruling party persistently in office, deploying the legal and extra-legal levers of state will anyway lead to fascist conditions and oblige the co-option of all major civil society organisations—i.e. the realist analysis of Gramsci rather than the normative analysis of de Tocqueville (Wood 2014).

These prevailing political and structural conditions have profound implications for the MFS II exercise. Put simply the scope for significant civil society strengthening as a function of enhanced capabilities through capacity building has been very limited over the study period and the prognosis is not good either. This conclusion obviously also restricts the prospect of attributing (through process tracing and contribution analysis) successful change to the variable of CFA support and Dutch government funding. In log frame terms, the right hand 'assumptions' column has overwhelmed the implied causation through a theory of change between inputs, outputs and outcomes.

**Table 1: Selected Macroeconomic Indicators in Bangladesh**

| **Indicators** | **Year** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1994-95** | **1999-00** | **2004-05** | **2007-08** | **2010-11** |
| Real GDP growth rate (%) | 4.93 | 5.94 | 5.38 | 6.2 | 6.7 |
| Per capita GDP (in US$) | - | 368 | 449 | 559 | 772 |
| Inflation (CPI-%) | 8.66 | 2.79 | 6.48 | 9.9 | 8.8 |
| National savings as % of GDP | 19.1 | 23.1 | 26.5 | 30.2 | 28.8 |
| Gross investment as % of GDP | 19.1 | 23.0 | 24.4 | 24.2 | 25.2 |
| Tax revenue as % of GDP | 7.9 | 6.8 | 8.7 | 8.8 | 11.9 |
| Export as % of GDP | 9.1 | 12.2 | 14.4 | 17.5 | 20.6 |
| Import as % of GDP | 15.4 | 17.8 | 21.9 | 24.5 | 27.1 |
| Remittances (billion US$) | - | - | - | 7.9 | 11.66 |
| Sectoral share of agriculture to GDP (%) | 26.03 | 25.58 | 21.91 | 20.83 | 20.01 |

Source: Bangladesh Economic Survey (various years), Ministry of Finance, GoB.

**Table 2: Incidence of Absolute and Hardcore Poverty in Bangladesh**

| **Year** | **Based on CBN method** | | **Based on DCI method** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Upper poverty line** | **Lower poverty line** | **Absolute poverty (2,122 K. cal)** | **Hardcore poverty (1,805 K. cal)** |
| 2010 | 31.5 | 17.6 | - | - |
| 2005 | 40.0 | 25.1 | 40.4 | 19.5 |
| 2000 | 48.9 | 34.3 | 44.3 | 20.0 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995-95 | 50.1 | 35.1 | 47.5 | 25.1 |
| 1991-92 | 56.6 | 41.0 | 47.5 | 28.0 |

Source: Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2005, 2010.

**Table 3: Selected Social Development Indicators in Bangladesh, 1990-2010**

| **Indicators** | | **Year** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **1990** | **1995** | **2000** | **2003/05** | **2010/11** |
| % Underweight | Rural | - | - | 53.9 | 48.8 | 38.7 |
| | Urban | - | - | 43.1 | 42.2 | 28.0 |
| | National | 68 | 56.3 | 50.8 | 47.5 | 36.4 |
| % Stunted | Rural | - | - | 51.1 | 44.3 | 42.7 |
| | Urban | - | - | 40.4 | 37.6 | 36.2 |
| | National | 64 | 54.6 | 48.0 | 43 | 41.3 |
| Total Fertility Rate | | 4.3 | 3.5 | 3.0 | 2.56 | 2.1 |
| Under 5 Mortality Rate (per 1000) | | 151 | 125 | 92 | 88 | 48 |
| Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000) | | 94 | 71 | 57 | 53.3 | 31 |
| Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000) | | 478 | 447 | 400 | 391 | - |
| Access to safe Drinking Water | | 89 | 97 | 97.5 | 97.4 | 97.8 |
| Access to Sanitary Toilet | | 21 | 38 | 43.4 | 53.2 | 51.5 |
| Literacy Rate (7+) | Male | 38.9 | - | 49.5 | 52.8 | 54.1 |
| | Female | 25.5 | - | 40.1 | 44.5 | 49.4 |
| | Both | 32.4 | - | 44.9 | 48.8 | 51.8 |
| Net Primary enrolment rate | Boys | 60 | 82 | 81 | 81.1 | 92.2 |
| | Girls | 59 | 82 | 83 | 84.4 | 97.3 |
| | Both | 60 | 82 | 82 | 82.8 | 94.8 |
| Contraceptive Prevalence Rate | | 40 | 49 | 52 | 53.4 | 61.2 |
| Rate of Immunization (DPT 3): 12-23 Months | | 62 | 69 | 74.4 | 81.0 | 93.2 |
| Severe Malnutrition (MUAC < 12.5 cm): 12-59 months | Boys | - | - | 3.6 | 3.6 | - |
| | Girls | - | - | 5.7 | 4.8 | - |
| | Both | 11 | 11 | 4.7 | 4.2 | - |
| Net Secondary Enrolment | | 31.47 | 43.24 | 45.39 | 47.75 | 53.7 |
| Boys-Girls Ratio in Primary | | - | 1.103 | 1.036 | 1.1098 | - |
| Boys-Girls Ratio in Secondary | | 1.23 | 1.096 | 0.866 | - | - |

Source: BDHS (various years), MICS (various years), BANBEIS (various years), BER (various year), Population Census 2011.

## 3. Key information on projects/SPOs, selection of SPOs for process tracing/contribution analysis

### *3.1 MDG Component*

The aim of the MDG was to assess the contribution of MFS II funding to the achievement of specific MDG goals. The four SPOs involved in the MDG component study had been pre-selected and research questions had been pre-defined by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Although the SPOs in the study aim for results on more than one MDG, as part of the pre-selection process one MDG theme was randomly selected as the main focus for the evaluation. A baseline survey was carried out on all the SPOs in 2012 and two years later a follow up assessment was carried out. Further details of the methodology and analysis for the MDG component are provided in section 4 below.

Bangladesh has a population of about 160 million with an area of only 144,000 square kilometers which makes the country the most densely populated country in the world barring a few small city states like Singapore. However, the Bangladesh economy has experienced both macroeconomic stability and modest economic growth following its transition to a democratic process in the early 1990s. The Bangladesh economy has registered an average GDP growth of around 6 per cent in recent years.

As stated above in section 2, the incidence of poverty (including moderate and extreme/hardcore poverty) has declined in Bangladesh over the past several years: income poverty has declined from 56.6 percent in 1991-92 to 40.0 percent in 2005 and 31.5 percent in 2010. Similarly, extreme poverty has also declined substantially during the same period. However, nearly one-third of the population still lives below the national poverty line. With such a high incidence of poverty, the government as well as the non-government organizations and development partners are active in implementing various anti-poverty and social programs to help the poor and the poorest in the country. This progress has been supported by significant progress across a range of MDG indicators (see section 2 above).

In this circumstances, several poverty reducing, livelihoods improvement, human and social development and social mobilization type interventions have also been/are being implemented in Bangladesh with support from Dutch Government. The present evaluation is, therefore, designed to assess the impact of MFS II funded projects on MDG outcomes in Bangladesh.

A total of four projects were pre-selected for evaluation under the MDG sub-component. The names of the projects and partners and reference to MDGs are presented in the following matrix. A brief description of project specific contexts is also presented below.

**Table 4: Projects and Partners**

| Projects | Partners | Consortium | Total Budget Of which MFS11 % | MDGs/Themes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A2. Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women | Unnayan Shahojogy Team (UST) | ICCO Alliance | E105000 100% | 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) |
| A3. Rural Development Programme | Nijera Kori | ICCO Alliance | E2,711,870 11% | 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) |
| A1. Girl Power Programme | Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) | Child Rights Alliance | E233,679 90% | 3 (promote gender equality and empower women) |
| A4. Unite for Body Rights – CHC Project | Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) | SRHR Alliance | E950,000 52.6% | 4, 5 and 6 (4: reduce child mortality; 5: improve maternal health; 6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) |

**Project A2: Achieving Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women**

The project started in October 2009 and was completed in May 2012. It was an independent project and not a follow-up or continuation of another project. The project was implemented by Unnayan Shahojogy Team (UST), a SPO which works mainly in rural, vulnerable areas in Bangladesh. The main objective of the project was to i) assist people to create opportunities to be involved in sustainable income earning activities through mobilizing local resources; ii) provide support for vulnerable people, making them aware of the adverse impacts of climate change and preparing them to adapt well to changing circumstances; iii) organize more poor people of the working area as *samities* (groups) in order to provide them with development education and to facilitate the delivery of social and economic services so that they can build more resilient and sustainable livelihoods.

The project had 13,558 beneficiaries. Most of them were poor and extreme poor women in five villages of one upazila (sub-district) of Barguna district. The project entailed an initial

assessment to identify the poor/extreme poor in the respective villages. Then female members of the identified households were initially selected as potential members for the project. Then the formation of the groups (*samities)* was made one after another until the intended numbers of beneficiaries had been allocated to a group. Other project outputs included savings mobilization, training, capital support, seeds and plants distribution, production activities, and building liaisons with government and other agencies. The total project budget was EURO 105,000 which was fully funded by MFS II.

UST believes in people's power and also believes that it is people themselves who must find a way of achieving sustainable development. Following this perspective, UST tries to use the strength of local people by mobilizing them into groups and providing them support so that they themselves can get involved in various activities to achieve sustainable development.

The activities carried out under the project were aimed at improving the capacity of beneficiaries to carry out various production activities, enabling knowledge transfers on various social issues and early warning system and rescue and evacuation, establishing linkages with other agencies to achieve improved livelihoods and food security for beneficiaries.

The project managed to implement all the activities as planned. Although the project is located in one of the most disaster-prone areas of the country, no major local hazards occurred during the two years of the project.

**Project A3: Rural Development Program – Ensuring democracy, accountability and rights**

The project started in September 2010 and was completed in March 2013. This was the continuation of an earlier project of the southern partner. In fact, this is the core programme of the SPO (Nijera Kori) and as such has been implemented since the partner started activities in the locality, i.e. 1980. The project was initiated by the SPO, which works mainly among the poor people in rural communities in Bangladesh. The main objectives of the project were i) to unite people, both women and men who have long been victims of exploitation, social marginalization, oppression and poverty; ii) to enable people thus united to understand and develop awareness about their rights, causes of problems, and responsibilities; and iii) to empower people to take up challenges on their own to create better and more meaningful lives for themselves and their immediate community.

Landless and the marginal farmers, sharecroppers, day labourers, indigenous people, and fisher folk were the beneficiaries of the project. This project had 232,283 group members in 1,363 villages from 37 upazilas (sub-districts) located in 17 of a total of 64 districts in the country. An initial assessment was carried out to identify who could be the potential members/beneficiaries of the project. Those identified were then motivated to form groups of 16-30 members each. Most of the potential members of the villages were included in groups. The groups come together then as a village committee.

Project inputs included mobilizing beneficiaries into groups; assisting them to form village, union and upazila level committees; giving inputs including training so that beneficiaries could lead and manage the groups and the committees; providing support and training to help develop autonomous landless organizations; helping landless groups gain access to khas lands5 including dealing with land registrations and providing legal aid; identifying suitable income earning activities and helping beneficiaries take advantage of these by providing training, support funds and so forth.

The activities carried out under the project helped beneficiaries have better access to land and other collective community resources, and capacity to manage those resources. The important point to note here is that the evaluation of this project enabled us to assess the impact of social mobilization on MDG outcomes. The total project budget was EURO 2,711,870, of which 11% was provided by MFS II.

The project implemented all the activities as planned. The major challenge of the project, however, was the displacement of beneficiaries through both a rise in rural-urban labour migration as well as the eviction of poor people from marginal land.

**Project A1: Girl Power Project**

The project started in January 2011 and is expected to continue until December 2015. This is an independent project and was initiated through the support offered by MFS II. The main objectives of the project are to i) increase capacity of right holders (girls and young women) to protect themselves from gender-based violence; ii) strengthen civil society organizations in policy lobbying and advocacy to establish rights and justice for girls and young women; and iii) improve legal protection system for girls and young women.

[5] *Khas* land is government owned land which is usually distributed among selected beneficiary groups including the poor

Girls and young women aged 10-24 years are the beneficiaries of the project. The project targets 6,500 girls and young women aged 10-24 years as beneficiaries, and is implemented in different slums in 5 zones of Dhaka city. The implementing organization (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association - BNWLA) initially identified communities, which are more vulnerable and disadvantaged. Then a list of intended beneficiaries (around 25 for each group) was prepared with the support of local CSOs who have long been working with the respective communities.

The activities carried out under the project included identifying vulnerable locations and within these the most vulnerable girls and young women; providing support to the girls and young women so that they can organize their own groups; conducting orientation sessions for girls and young women on child rights, child protection and communication; conducting life skills training (e.g. karate); producing research reports on livelihood linkages and support requirements; providing livelihood training, and support for self-employment; conducting mass awareness campaigns at community levels on issues of violence, child marriage and child protection; establishing and servicing girls and young women forums and facilitating their meetings; and organizing annual conventions.

The activities are implemented in a range of communities and the lead implementing organization (Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association - BNWLA) collaborates with local CSOs to identify and support girls and young women. The total budget for the project is EURO 233,679, of which 90% is provided by MFS II

So far, the project has implemented all its planned activities. The major challenges of the project, however, are that beneficiary girls and young women live in fragile communities. As such they are constantly exposed to various dangers and the task of retaining them in the forum/network is a challenge. Once a young women/girl leaves the forum/network, it is often quite difficult to find them again.

The implementation of the project activities is directly monitored by the Dutch SPOs through its representative office in Bangladesh (Plan Bangladesh). Quarterly reports are produced and delivered. Regular meetings are also organized to discuss progress and any problems. Visits to the beneficiaries' communities are also made.

**Project A4: Unite for Body Rights – Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) Project**

The project started in January 2011 and is expected to be completed in December 2015. Like the previous one, it is an independent project and was initiated with the support of MFS II. The main objectives of the project are: i) to increase utilization of comprehensive SRHR services; and ii) to increase delivery of comprehensive sexuality education.

Young (aged 10-24 years) and poor people from 14,000 households who lack and/or cannot access SRH education and services are the beneficiaries of the project. The project is implemented in the Kaptai upazila of Rangamati district. The recipients of SRH services are mainly those who come to Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) for services. Community people, especially the youth and adolescents, are also advised to contact the UBR representatives at the CHC for any advice/support related to SRH. For Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), a group of 10 boys and 10 girls (20 in total) have been chosen from grades seven to nine from each of the educational institutes of the sub-district. These are meant to disseminate knowledge to other youths through peer education system. Teachers of the same educational institutes and the respective community leader have also been chosen for orientation workshops.

The implementing organization of the project, the Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC), is more than one hundred years old, and has been delivering reproductive and other health services to the people living in Kaptai and adjacent areas. Under the UBR project, CHC has set up a new office in the hospital with a dedicated team of health professionals and administrative staff. The activities that are being carried out by CHC under the project include:

- Provide an ante-natal, post-natal and delivery care to an increasing number of patients, particularly to those who are below 25 years of age;
- Provide services related to SRH (e.g., MR, D&C, SRH related surgeries, contraceptive support, etc.) to an increasing number of patients below the age of 25;
- Provide training and support to young counselors; and
- Form groups of boys and girls aged 10-24 years from different educational institutions of the sub-district, and provide training for Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

The project has so far implemented all its planned activities. However, the issues that the project is dealing with are sensitive given the socio-cultural context of the country. Even

though CHC has been working at the community level for many years. However it has not traditionally focused on sexual health and rights, especially amongst the youth and adolescents. It is therefore important that the project activities, especially the CSE component are implemented carefully because of its sensitive nature. The implementing organization seems to have achieved this successful. The hospital is very well regarded locally.

The implementation of project activities is monitored directly by the Dutch SPO through its representative in Bangladesh. Periodic reports are produced and delivered. Regular meetings are also organized to discuss progress and potential problems. Occasional visits to the respective communities are also made. The total budget of the project is EURO 950,000 of which 52.6% is funded by MFS II.

### *3.2 Capacity Development Component*

The aim of the Capacity Development component was to assess the contribution of MFS II funding to capacity building in five SPOs. The SPOs had been pre-selected and research questions had been pre-defined by MoFA. A baseline survey was carried out on all the SPOs in 2012 and two years later, a follow up assessment was carried out.

The capacity development component adopted an organisational assessment tool to evaluate five key capabilities: i) to adapt and self-renew; ii) to act and commit; iii) to deliver on development objectives; iv) to relate to external stakeholders; v) to achieve coherence. Workshops were carried out with SPO staff to identify specific indicators against each of these capabilities. Progress over the two year period was then assessed using these indicators. Other components of the evaluation included an organisational timeline, an impact grid and alternative explanation testing. Details are provided in section 4 below.

A total of five projects were pre-selected for evaluation under the CD sub-component. The names of the projects and partners are presented in the following matrix. A brief description of the partner NGO and specific contexts is also presented below.

**Table 5: Projects and Partners**

| **Projects** | **Partners** | **Consortium** | **CFA** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Organisational Capacity Development | Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)* | ICCO Alliance | Light for the World |
| Organisational Capacity Development | An Organisation for Social-Economic Development (AOSED)* | WASH Alliance | SIMAVI |
| Organisational Capacity | Practical Action | WASH Alliance | WASTE |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Development | Bangladesh (PAB) | | |
| Organisational Capacity Development | Sushasoner Jonny Procharavizan (SUPRO)* | Impact Alliance | Oxfam Novib |
| Organisational Capacity Development | Village Education Centre (VERC) | Communities Change Alliance | Cordaid |

*** Shared with Civil Society Strengthening Component**

**Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)**

The Capacity Development project started in 2011 and will continue into 2015. CDD is supported by Light for the World through Prism a member of the ICCO Alliance. Light for the World (LFTW) funding is aimed at strengthening the capacity of CDD and local partners towards mainstreaming disability. The cooperation started in 2003 and the end date is undefined as they are hoping to move to a strategic partnership after the 2015 funding has ended. The main concentration of support during this project period has been to help prepare funding proposals to broaden CDD funding base and provide a consultant to facilitate the process of developing a theory of change and a strategic master plan. These were still in the process of being finalised at the time of the evaluation.

**An Organisation for Social Economic Development (AOSED)**

AOSED was supported by Simavi (Dutch Wash Alliance) form January 2011 till the end of 2013. Following a mid-term review and discussions between Simavi and AOSED, a decision was taken not to continue with funding. There are contrasting and contentious views on the decision to discontinue funding (see relevant sections in the technical paper). AOSED is engaged primarily in water programmes in South Western Bangladesh based in Khulna. The group was founded in 1999/2000 with an emphasis on natural resources tied to concerns over livelihoods, climate change and focused on water related issues compounded by being in an area with coastal, delta, agricultural and drinking water challenges. AOSED has been relatively successful in supporting a participatory approach to water rights in many communities in the region. The SPO argues that water is a right, not just a commodity, which needs to be managed in the public interest (which does not assume that there are not costs to be met in doing so). In the baseline exercise in 2012, AOSED was optimistic and organisationally it was looking towards a positive future by planning an expansion in its work as well as organisational improvements. On our visits in 2014, we encountered several major problems linked to the decision not to continue funding. This decision had a very negative impact on AOSED because the MFS II support was its only major source of funding. Although at the time of our evaluation a VSO volunteer arrived funded by Simavi it was not possible to assess her contribution to capacity development.

**Practical Action Bangladesh**

The Capacity Development Project led by the Dutch WASH Alliance funding to Practical Action Bangladesh is through a Dutch NGO – WASTE the total amount of funds in relation to Practical Action Bangladesh overall budget is 3%. The cooperation between the two organisations began in 2005 is expected to end in 2015. However they are working on developing other programmes and projects and are expecting a longer-term relationship. The MFS II project period funded a continuous process of Capacity Development support since 2005. In November 2012, the Wash Alliance supported a joint process of developing a Theory of Change for the Bangladesh Wash Alliance of which all members of the Urban and Rural Wash Alliances participated (the contract was managed by ICCO). Simavi and the Wash Alliance Country Coordinator attended the activities to encourage participation. Other capacity development inputs have been provided to the Bangladesh Wash Alliance and some specific capacity development inputs were designed for Practical Action Bangladesh during the project period.

**Sushasoner Jonny Procharavizan (SUPRO)**

SUPRO is an organisation with some 600 organisational members throughout Bangladesh. SUPRO is in essence a capacity building organisation which aims to improve the lobbying and campaigning work of its members. Oxfam/Novib has supported SUPRO, since 2006 and plans to continue at least until the end of the current MFS II. Oxfam/Novib has also introduced SUPRO to an international network working on taxation issues. The major weakness of SUPRO is that it is financially overly dependent on Oxfam/Novib. SUPRO's aim is to both develop a stronger civil society voice as well as build on certain campaigns common to all the members. In some ways it explicitly aims to both strengthen civil society and build the capacity of various levels within Bangladeshi society, from its own members (mainly local NGOs), the grass roots groups with which their members work and local government officials both elected and unelected. As can be seen from our review SUPRO can indeed claim several areas of success for example in its fair taxation and other programmes. This has been achieved through the legitimacy of its widespread membership, which has strengthened it relationships with government and other stakeholders locally. The Oxfam/Novib contribution to SUPRO has been crucial to its success.

**Village Education Centre (VERC)**

VERC is one of the oldest groups in Bangladesh founded in 1977. VERC took its capacity development work directly into villages working with the rural poor, starting with women's literacy, children's creativity programmes, health, sanitation and human development.

VERC's strength lies in its training services, with a commitment to quality materials and trainers. To date, they claim to have provided training to 100,000 people. VERC is well regarded throughout Bangladesh; it has led the development of many now accepted approaches to non-formal education, water and sanitation. It has increasingly realised that it needs to work with government not ignore them as perhaps happened in the past. The relationship with Cordaid goes back many years and is seen to have been productive for VERC, although it has to be said that this is because of many years of engagement not specifically anything which may have happened in the last couple of years. Thus the concept of MFS II to look at capacity development within this time period misses the point for such a large well-established agency with long term relationships and partnerships. Some of the major changes in VERC's approach are, they claim, the result of Cordaid's funding and ideas, but often these happened more than 10 years ago when the funding was a far greater proportion of VERC's income; currently accounting for less the 3%.

### *3.3 Civil Society Strengthening Component*

Unlike the other two components, the Strengthening Civil Society component did not have pre-selected SPOs but did have pre-selected questions, defined by MoFA. We selected 16 SPOs to carry out a baseline (2012) and follow-up assessment (2014). The main criteria used to select the 16 SPOs were i) MDG focus; ii) size and geographical representation; iii) CFA partnership representation. To facilitate the baseline and follow-up assessment, we adopted the CIVICUS methodology and in between these two points, we incorporated a contribution analysis of five detailed case studies. See section 4 below for further details on the methodology.

Three of the selected SPOs were also involved in the capacity development component (AOSED, SUPRO and CDD). Overviews of each of these organisations are provided in the previous section. In these cases, we looked to see if and how performance in one component might impact on another component.

**Table 6: Selected SPOs for Strengthening Civil Society (SCS) component:**

| | **CFAs** | **MDG 1** | **MDG 2** | **MDG 3** | **MDG 4, 5, 6** | **MDG 7 a, b** | **MDG 7 c** | **Good govern.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ADD | Communities of | | | | X | X | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | change | | | | | | | |
| ASK | Impact | | | X | | | | X |
| AOSED | WASH alliance | | | | | X | X | |
| Aparajeyo | Childs right alliance | | X | X | | | | X |
| ACD | Childs right alliance | | | | | | | |
| BNN | Press Freedom | | X | X | | | | X |
| BWLA | Childs right alliance | | | | | | | X |
| Caritas | Communities of change | X | X | | X | X | | |
| CDD | ICCO alliance | | | | X | | | X |
| CSS | Woord in DAAD | X | X | | X | | | X |
| DSK | SRHR Alliance | | | | X | | X | |
| FPAB | SRHR Alliance | | | X | X | | X | |
| PAB | WASH alliance | X | | | | | | |
| SUPRO | Impact | | X | | | | | X |
| Uttaran | WASH alliance | | | | | X | X | |
| VARD | Communities of change | | | | X | X | | |

* MDG 7 a, b: Sustainable living environment and biodiversity

**MDG 7c: Drinking water and sanitation

Both **ACD** and **Aparajeyo** (the two remaining SPO case studies not overlapping with the capacity development component) are implementers of the same *Girl Power Project* (GPP), a five-year (2011-2015) project funded by Plan International Bangladesh. The overall aim of the project is to promote equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women and eradicate gender-based violence. There are four main areas of engagement:

1. Civil society level. Main activities include forming and strengthening CSOs around issues related to violence against young women and girls including training on child protection and advocacy around gender violence;
2. Institutional level. Main activities here include promoting greater awareness and building capacity of government officials around gender equality, especially for young women and goals
3. Socio-cultural level. Activities here include forming local groups capable of protecting children and ensuring gender equality and protection
4. Individual level. Activities here include training and skills formation of girls and young women, creation the "Girls Forums", child protection committees, karate classes, birth registration amongst other things.

Through **ACD**, the Girl Power Project is implemented in 5 Upazilas within Rajshahi District (north west of Bangladesh), and targets over 6,000 girls and young women between the ages of 10 and 24; 25 CSOs; 120 duty bearers and 100 CBOs. Since Rajshahi is flanking the Indian

border, ACD also implements activities to stop child trafficking. The total value of the grant is 21,279,024 Taka (approximately 240,000 euros), which constitutes the largest grant held by ACD.

Through **Aparajeyo** Bangladesh, the Girl Power Project is implemented in urban settings in five of the Southern wards of Dhaka city. The project has 6,250 direct beneficiaries (girls and young women). Aparajeyo provides and delivers services directly to the beneficiaries themselves with no intermediary institution. The contribution of GPP in Aparajeyo Bangladesh's total budget is 4.46%.

## 4. General evaluation approach and key indicators (methodology)

The study seeks to evaluate the contribution of the MFS II round of Dutch government funding via CFAs to Southern Partner Organisations (SPOs) in Bangladesh over the period 2012-2014. The evaluation comprises 3 components:

- the achievement of selected Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) via SPOs;
- the contribution of both funding and CFA support to the organisational capacity of SPOs to engage in both service delivery (i.e. towards MDGs via **intermediation**) and in forms of social **mobilisation** to strengthen the place of civil society in the overall development of the society;
- the outcomes of SPO activity in terms of indicators about strengthening civil society which might be traced back to MFS II support.

The study proceeded through a baseline exercise in 2012, followed by an endline study in late 2014. The quantitative data were collected for comparison at 2 fixed points (late 2012 and late 2014). Between these two points, additional intensive case studies were carried out, using a combination of quantitative indicators, qualitative descriptions and observations for contribution analysis.

**For the MDG study**, 4 SPOs were pre-selected as part of the initial contract for this study, reflecting different MDGs, scale of operation and proportions of budget supported by MFS11 (see below MDG summary for more details on these variables and methodology, calibrated to each SPO project).

Before-after and project-control comparisons through difference-in-differences methods (by initially taking double differences in means or proportions and then by undertaking difference in difference regressions for some selected indicators for validation of the results obtained) were used here to assess the impacts of the projects. In addition, group discussions and individual interviews were also carried out to understand the underlying causes. The study drew sample households/respondents from both the project beneficiaries and the control/comparison groups. This enabled us to make comparisons of outcomes before and after the implementation of the project, and between beneficiaries and control/comparison households over the same period.

Where data are available for both 'before' and 'after' the implementation of the project and also for both the 'project' and 'control' respondents, the difference-in-difference method itself is expected to produce robust results. These conditions were met in all four cases. Although we considered including 'matching methods', these would not have improved the robustness and comprehensiveness of 'difference in difference'. We carried out difference-in-difference analyses by initially taking double differences in means or proportions as applicable (see Table 9 through to Table 13) and then by carrying out difference-in-difference regressions for some of the indicators to validate the results. The regressions are reported in Appendix 1, Table 5.1 to Table 5.5 of the Technical Report). Furthermore, we triangulated difference in difference findings with key stakeholders through qualitative interviews.

For projects A2 and A3, the implementing SPOs used certain inclusion criteria to select beneficiaries. Although beneficiaries are reported as individuals (i.e. poor women in project A2 and poor and landless in project A3), in project terms activities are often aimed at household units and not only individuals. Thus for example income generating activities are usually arranged at a household level not an individual one. In order to carry out our analysis, we sampled households with beneficiary members. As such for most of our data, the basic unit of analysis is the household. In some questions, we have disaggregated to reach individual level analysis (e.g. schooling, training etc.). In selecting the sample households from the two projects, we adopted the same criteria used by the SPO. In this way our sample is a robust representative of project beneficiaries. In the first stage therefore, a census was carried out in the respective villages to collect household information based on some key household and individual indicators. Then a list of eligible households was prepared and this

was used to randomly sample households for the study.6 The same technique was applied for both the beneficiary and the control/comparison groups for both projects (A2 and A3).

For A1 and A4, the sample of beneficiaries was chosen randomly from among the project beneficiaries. The selection of control/comparison groups was not as easy as the previous two projects. However we made every effort to identify control/comparison groups for both projects using the same criteria that were used by the SPOs to select their target beneficiary groups. The basic feature of the beneficiaries and the control/comparison groups was that they both live in similar geo-physical, political and cultural settings and are from similar socioeconomic locations.

For two projects (A2 and A1), the control/comparison groups were chosen from the same villages/communities and for the remaining two projects (A3 and A4), the control/comparison groups were selected from neighbouring villages/communities. The nature of A3 and A4 means that contamination (i.e. spill over of benefits) could easily occur since there are elements of community focused approach of the intervention. In these cases, we deliberately sought control groups from nearby but not the same villages. The selection of the households/respondents was made in line with the way (using the same criteria) beneficiaries were selected.

The table below presents the size of the sample of both beneficiary and the control/comparison groups for each of the projects.

**Table 7: Sample size beneficiary and control groups for each project**

| **Projects** | **Sample size: Beneficiary** | **Sample size: Control/ comparison** |
|---|---|---|
| A2. Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women | 150 | 100 |
| A3. Rural Development Program | 200 | 100 |
| A1. Girl Power Program | 200 | 100 |
| A4. Unite for Body Rights – CHC Project | 150 | 100 |
| Total | 700 | 400 |

Four sets of questionnaires were developed to collect information. The first set of questionnaires was used for Projects A2 and A3 to collect information from respondent households. The second set of questionnaires was used for Project A1 to collect information from respondent girls and young women. The third and fourth sets of questionnaires were

[6] Our reporting of data therefore focuses on sampled households. Where the data refers to individuals as opposed to households, we make this clear.

used for Project A4 to collect information from both the respondent households and adolescent boys and girls. The questionnaires included variables related to demographic, socio-economic, gender relation, women empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, and relevant other issues. Further information on MDG methodology can be found in the Technical Report, Appendix 2.

**For the capacity development study**, 5 SPOs were pre-selected for intensive case study treatment as part of the initial contract for the study. In conformity with the whole MFS 11 cross country study, 5 organisational capabilities were each scored on a 5 point scale at two fixed points in 2012 and 2014. Workshops were carried out with SPO staff to identify specific indicators against each of these capabilities. During workshops, the team also worked with the SPOs to produce timelines and impact grids. The former helped identify key milestones and donors, which then provided evidence of organisational change.

On top of this, in the follow-up assessment, the team introduced an impact grid exercise to help identify key impact narratives (positive and negative). The key impact narratives were then followed up through field visits, interviews and so forth in order to assess the significance and weight of the impact and evaluate the contribution of MFS II funding and support. Follow up on the impact grids aimed to test therefore alternative explanations of change.

Holistic organisational assessment tools are most useful for organisations seeking to self-assess their capabilities. However when using them to draw plausible linkages between an external agencies' output work (i.e. capacity building) and resulting internal (SPO level) outcome change (i.e. capacity development) there are potential flaws. This is particularly the case where the external agency does not have significant influence over the local organisation in all its areas (as was the case with some of the SPOs pre-selected for this component). Thus the tool may show significant changes but these may not be traceable to the external agency. Contribution analysis does not really overcome this flaw with the reduction of information to two over simple ratings: capability and contributions. Within each capability, the spectrum of activity can be wide with gains and losses attributable to different variables of which the external agency is only one. There is also the inherent problem of positive bias in self-reporting, especially in Bangladesh where auto critiques simply provide openings for enemies (see context section above).

There has also been a problem of inherent perverse selection. The choice of SPOs to examine (note these were pre-selected) in relation to MFS 11 was oriented more towards those with

significance: larger, more likely impact (especially on MDGs), and with longer established profiles and reputation. Thus they already had capacity, and indeed more capacity than their supporting CFAs to engage with the complex political and socio-economic context of Bangladesh where transparency of process and set up has to give way to deep structures replete with patronage and personalised loyalties. This is a subtle cultural environment in which crude, measures of organisational capacity can be seriously misplaced. Dutch CFAs seek to operate in a liberal-democratic pluralist political framework and 'capacities' are derived from that premise. These are not the qualifications which lead to sustainability of primary purposes and organisational existence in Bangladesh. In other words, the notion of 'capacity' in the five capability model developed by ECDPM do not engage with the capacities needed for survival and effectiveness in the patron-client, *mastaanised* context of Bangladesh where even the regulatory authority, the NGO Affairs Bureau, expects to receive rent to permit an SPO to exist and function (see context section above).

Finally the core methodological problem in relation to process tracing is the misplaced syllogism between capacity enhancement of a SPO and any changes on that SPO's immediate environment/community. Process tracing is best applied when there is a reasonably sure case for believing that a change has happened. Thus it may be valid to identify a change in capacity and then seek to investigate contributory factors. It may be equally valid to identify changes at community level and seek to investigate what role (if any) was played by the SPO. But to put these results together may be stretching the evidence too far. In such cases we would be looking to assess a change at community level, identify the contribution not just of the SPO but of changes in the SPO's relations with the community, and then go further back to establish the contribution of the Dutch agency to those changes in relations. In our opinion, successive leaps of this kind introduce too much margin for error, and making decisions based on these findings would be fraught with difficulties.

In other words, process tracing may be a valid methodology for assessing the contribution of the SPO to an observed change. It may also be a valid methodology for assessing the contribution of an external agency to capacity change within a supported organisation. But if you try and put the two together you may end up with a case where the potential margin for error is far higher than the degree of change witnessed. Further information on capacity Development methodology can be found in the Technical Report, Appendix 3.

For the **civil society strengthening** component, in conformity with the whole MFS II cross country study, 5 CIVICUS aggregate indicators were scored at two fixed points in 2012 and 2014 for a sample of 16 SPOs drawn from a total SPO population of 60 to represent size,

significance, MDG sector, geographical spread and CFA range. Within each of these 5 aggregate CIVICUS indicators, there were up to 6 sub-indicators to contribute to the aggregate indicator score. The scores in 2012 and 2014 reflected a combination of 'judgements' based upon qualitative interviews and dialogue by a trained team of interviewers supervised by the academic leaders from Bath, their own standardising judgments, self-reporting, and triangulation with other stakeholders. In addition to this 16 SPO Q-squared exercise, 5 of the 16 SPOs were selected (again reflecting sector and significance) for intensive case study process tracing for contribution analysis, conducted by the academic supervisors from Bath.

The CIVICUS exercise provided snapshots of performance at specific points. We wanted to look more at process and understand how impact was achieved (or not) and also test the claimed impact contributions of SPOs. To do this, we identified 5 SPOs in the follow up study to carry out more detailed and in-depth case studies. This entailed a focused field trips and interviews with various stakeholders. In carrying out the case studies, we also developed a systematic contribution analysis, which enabled us to test SPO contributions to strengthening civil society.

Like process tracing, contribution analysis is a theory based impact evaluation which explores attribution (cause-effect) questions through a logical argumentation in order to assess the contributions a policy/programme makes to observed changes in outcomes. Contribution analysis does not prove causality but seeks to reduce uncertainty about the difference a programme may or may not be making. This approach follows 6 key steps: a) establish a cause-effect issue; b) develop a postulated theory of change in relation to the cause-effect; c) gather evidence on the theory of change; d) construct a contribution story or narrative, and challenges to it; e) seek additional evidence; f) revise/confirm contribution narrative.

As indicated above, we selected 5 SPOs for contribution analysis. Typically this involved field visits of 3-4 days by the research team and subsequent iterations with the evolving contribution. During this time, we also conducted the CIVICUS questionnaire. As will be seen in the technical reports, the contribution analysis exposed the research team to a more complex policy environment in which it was observed the coexistence of multiple interventions targeting the beneficiaries of CFA supported SPO interventions; multiple partners and stakeholders contributing to the observed changes associated with the SPO intervention; a dynamic and fast moving environment which impacted the ability of different actors to implement activities and the feasibility of these actions resulting in change. In short,

contribution analysis forced the research team to deal with greater complexity in assessing change and the contribution of SPO interventions.

As indicated in our baseline and again above, the contribution analysis represented our attempt to incorporate 'thick case studies' into our analysis in order to complement the 'thinner cases' provided by CIVICUS analysis. With this aim in mind, the contribution analysis proved successful and enabled us to go beyond some of the inevitable limitations of the CIVICUS approach.

## 5. Summary of results and analysis (by component)

### *5.1 MDGs*

Below we provide a summary of projects, partners, consortium membership, budget size and MDG focus. These have all explained in detail in relevant sections above.

**Table 8: Projects and Partners**

| **Projects** | **Partners** | **Consortium** | **Total Budget Of which MFS11 %** | **MDGs/Themes** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A2. Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women | Unnayan Shahojogy Team (UST) | ICCO Alliance | E105000 100% | 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) |
| A3. Rural Development Programme | Nijera Kori | ICCO Alliance | E2,711,870 11% | 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) |
| A1. Girl Power Programme | Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) | Child Rights Alliance | E233,679 90% | 3 (promote gender equality and empower women) |
| A4. Unite for Body Rights – CHC Project | Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) | SRHR Alliance | E950,000 52.6% | 4, 5 and 6 (4: reduce child mortality; 5: improve maternal health; 6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases) |

### *5.2 Key Findings (Major Impact)*

In order to understand the results, it is important to reiterate that:

1. the evaluation period covers the 2012-2014 period. All the selected MDG projects have however been or are being implemented over a longer time period;
2. the baseline survey was carried out after all the projects had been started. Indeed the baseline was carried out after one project (A2) had been completed. Our baseline therefore may not be an accurate reflection of the beneficiary baseline. This is evidenced above in *inter alia* Table 3 and discussed in footnote 5 of the Technical Report;
3. the end-line survey was completed before two projects (A1 and A4) had been completed;
4. two of the four projects (A1 and A4) are 'new' or 'innovative' in Bangladesh and are 'culturally sensitive';
5. although both A1 and A4 were pre-selected to assess impact on selected MDG outcomes, we have considered a wider range of socio-economic and rights, awareness and empowerment related indicators precisely because the projects are innovative and culturally sensitive.

In summary, the results obtained through our evaluation have to be read with the above points in mind. Moreover the results should be read and interpreted in conjunction with results obtained for other indicators indicated in (5) above. Our overall observations on findings are:

(a) not all indicators demonstrate significant improvement over the period under consideration;
(b) however there have been some significant improvements in some indicators and these are also attributable to project interventions. This would indicate that although our assessment period is short (two years) there is good evidence that project outcomes are moving in the 'right' direction;
(c) our data largely shows consistent results between different related indicators. Thus for example where we see improvements in the percentage of people moving out of extreme poverty or always in deficit category, we also see a 'deterioration' in the percentage of people in moderate poverty or occasional deficit category. This simply indicates improvement or mobility at the lowest end but not much beyond this level;
(d) results are also consistent with what the projects expected in terms of results.

In order to see whether and to what extent the achievements are due to project interventions, a difference-in-difference method has been applied in the four projects under consideration. The difference in difference takes into account the counter-factual, and hence, provides the net impact of project intervention upon the lives and livelihoods of project beneficiaries. The results are presented below in Tables 9 through to 13 including standard errors of differences

in means and proportions with associated t-values in parentheses in the last column7. Whether the results are statistically significant or not have also been identified in the table with ** as significant at 5% level and * as significant at 10% level. In order to check the robustness of the results obtained through taking double differences of means or proportions of the variables under consideration, we have also carried out difference-in-difference regressions. The results are presented in Appendix 1 (Table 5.1 to Table 5.5) in the Technical Report.

Regression results confirm the findings obtained through taking double differences of means or proportions as reported in Tables 9 through 13. Although the magnitude of the findings are somewhat different in the regressions results8, the statistical significance remains the same. In considering results, we need to keep in mind the framework of evaluation of the projects, namely:

(a) the evaluation covered a two year period (2012-2014) while all of the projects had been or are being implemented over a longer time span; and

(b) the baseline was carried out after all the projects had started;

(c) Project A2 had been completed before the baseline was carried out.

The projects for the MDG component had been preselected and so the team had no control over points a to c. We should however consider the results and their statistical significance keeping the lack of uniformity of the assessment framework in mind.

***Project A2: Achieving Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women***

Given the remarks above, the results for Project A2 indicate that it has been able to contribute significantly to improvements in land holding and also improvements in poverty status (Table 9). Improvements clearly attributable to projects have also been noted in the areas of crisis coping mechanisms (i.e. able to use savings rather than reducing consumption and withdrawing children from school and sending them to work); access to various public services (public health, land office, micro finance institutions, etc.); and satisfaction with the

---

[7] **(i) Standard Error of the difference between means is calculated as:**

$SE_{diff} = SQRT [(SE_1)^2 + (SE_2)^2]$

Where, SQRT = square root, $SE_1$ = standard error of mean in sample 1, and $SE_2$ = standard error of mean in sample 2.

**(ii) Standard Error of the difference between proportions is calculated as:**

$SE_{diff} = SQRT [((p_1(1-p_1))/n_1) + ((p_2(1-p_2))/n_2)]$

Where, SQRT = square root, $p_1$ = proportion in sample 1, $p_2$ = proportion in sample 2, and $n_1$ and $n_2$ are sample size in samples 1 and 2 respectively.

[8] The regressions results are different because they only take into account the matching cases. Difference in Difference in means or proportions instead take into account all cases.

same services. The project has also contributed in undertaking collective community activities and women empowerment (Table 9)

The reduction in the percentage of people self-reporting themselves as 'extreme poor' is clearly a headline result. This is consistent with the design of the project which intended to identify income earning opportunities for poor women. This has been successful and resulted in increased incomes and expenditures (Table 6 in the Technical Report). The SPO also works on a model which organises beneficiaries into self-help groups or *samities*. One of the aims of the *samity* model is to promote collective action and lobbying especially around access to key services. The findings from Table 9 as well as our qualitative interviews indicate that this has been a successful strategy, and that respondents are significantly more satisfied with key services. Finally, there are some important results in terms of women's empowerment with women beneficiaries reporting more decision-making power at household and community levels, and greater levels of mobility.

***Project A3: Rural Development Program – Ensuring democracy, accountability and rights***

Accounting for counter-factuals, Project A3 has contributed to improving education levels (i.e. completed years of schooling), land holding, and improvement in poverty status (Table 10). Improvements attributable to project interventions have also been noted in the areas of being able to save money (total amount), access to various public services with satisfaction, participation in organizations, and empowerment of women in respect of increased decision-making abilities (Table 10).

Project A3 is implemented by one of the oldest SPOs in Bangladesh and the project area is an area where the SPO has been working almost since its establishment. The SPO is known for its strong rights based approach and its focus on securing access to public land and resources, as well as key social services. This is in short a social mobilization organisation and the closest we have to a membership based organisation. Significant results in increased land ownership (usually khas or government owned land distributed to the poorest), increased savings (supported by membership of *samities*), access to key public services (health) and satisfaction with these (the legal system) are all very consistent with the SPO's approach and its track record. At the same time, the positive results related to household participation in external organisations and the significant results in terms of increased female participation and decision-making within households and the community reflect again the SPO's track record in a rights focussed development agenda and its support for poor women.

***Project A1: Girl Power Project***

As indicated above, Project A1 is a new or innovative kind of project in Bangladesh9. Its focus on gender-based violence also means that the project engages with culturally sensitive issues. However, as observed from difference-in-difference analyses, the project has been able to raise awareness as well as participation and decision-making abilities of beneficiary girls and young women. Importantly it has also had a significant impact in reducing key violations of rights related to gender based violence such as torture, loss of dignity and so forth (Table 11). Beneficiary levels of education have also increased, and beneficiary households' economic status has improved. Improvements attributable to project interventions have also been noted in the areas of sharing household responsibilities with other members (i.e. not burdening young girls only with roles traditionally given to females such as caring for household members which then prevents them from following other activities such as schooling) and access to media. Some improvements have also been noted in raising awareness about consequences and risks of early marriage, dowry, early pregnancy, etc. The project has also contributed to improved understanding and practices among the beneficiary girls and young women in relation to gender equity, participation in household decision making, mobility, and rights.

Project A1 had not been completed before we carried out the end-line survey. As indicated above, this meant that the SPO was still carrying out key project activities. At one level this could help explain why there are significant differences in some of the questions around awareness raising, and why there are significant results in areas such as spending time at school and less time doing 'traditional female roles' such as food preparation and fuel collection alone. Some of the questions around 'decision making' especially within households and communities do not give significant results. Our qualitative interviews would suggest that this might reflect the fact that the project engages with culturally sensitive issues around gender roles and responsibilities, and that the beneficiaries are adolescent girls who traditionally in Bangladesh refer mostly to male guardians for key decisions.

***Project A4: Unite for Body Rights – Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) Project***

Project A4 is also a new and somewhat innovative intervention that has been undertaken to improve awareness and services about sexuality and reproductive health among adolescents. Like Project A1, it therefore engages with issues which are very culturally sensitive.

[9] By new or innovative, we refer to the fact that there are not many similar programmes in the country, and also the implementation of such programmes are challenging in the social, cultural, religious context of Bangladesh.

The double difference analysis shows significant impact at household levels on health status, food security, views on the quality of services from the hospital, use of ante and post-natal services (Table 12). In terms of the adolescents, the analysis shows significant impact on awareness of risks and consequences of early marriage, pregnancy and dowry; knowledge of family planning methods and pregnancy as well as sexual and reproductive health; the consequences of non-registration of births; equality between men and women in relation to wages, food consumption, inheritance, education, medical care, and participation in committees (Table 13).

Again project A4 was still being implemented when we carried out the surveys. Our qualitative interviews confirmed our quantitative analysis in that there was a strong endorsement of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the different trainings and awareness raising activities around health and sexual and reproductive rights. These activities were still being offered when we carried out the survey. At the household level, beneficiary households reported improved health status, and use as well as satisfaction with hospital services. The hospital has been servicing local communities for many years. It has a very strong reputation as a good hospital. The results seem to confirm this, and pick up on this reputation.

**Table 9: Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women (Project A2)**

| **Indicators** | **Difference in difference (2014-2012)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Program** | **Compari-son** | **Double difference** | **Standard Error (t-value)** |
| **Land ownership (in decimals)** | | | | |
| - Average homestead land | 0.27 | 0.03 | 0.24** | 0.10 (2.42) |
| **Economic status - self assessment (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Extreme poor | -27.83 | -13.8 | -14.03** | 0.05 (2.82) |
| **Crisis coping mechanisms at household level. Multiple responses (%)** | | | | |
| - Use of savings | 3.12 | -11.62 | 14.74** | 0.03 (4.22) |
| - Reduces food consumption | -41.68 | -32.23 | -9.45 | 0.06 (1.54) |
| - Reduces other expenses | -24.33 | -18.53 | -5.8 | 0.05 (1.12) |
| - Withdraw of children temporarily from school | -2 | 0 | -2* | 0.01 (1.78) |
| - Sending children to work | -7.1 | 2.83 | -9.93** | 0.03 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | (3.76) |
| **Proportion of households accessing services (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Public health service | 11.24 | 4.4 | 6.84** | 0.03 (2.10) |
| - Land office | 8.5 | -1.3 | 9.8** | 0.03 (3.92) |
| - Micro finance institutes/NGOs | 72.06 | 28.6 | 43.46** | 0.06 (7.52) |
| - Services from Union Parishads | 6.83 | 5.8 | 1.03 | 0.03 (0.33) |
| **Level of satisfaction (% of those households which accessed a service)** | | | | |
| Public health service | | | | |
| - Fully satisfied | 4.64 | 0.89 | 3.75* | 0.02 (1.94) |
| Public education | | | | |
| - Partially satisfied | 14.59 | 1.16 | 13.43** | 0.03 (4.44) |
| Land office | | | | |
| - Fully satisfied | 11.76 | -3.19 | 14.95** | 0.03 (4.79) |
| Micro finance institutes/NGOs | | | | |
| - Fully satisfied | -0.54 | -5.88 | 5.34** | 0.02 (2.20) |
| Social safety net program | | | | |
| - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | -2.33 | -16.45 | 14.12** | 0.04 (3.62) |
| Police | | | | |
| - Partially satisfied | -42.9 | -60 | 17.1** | 0.06 (2.71) |
| Court | | | | |
| - Partially satisfied | 16.17 | -11.93 | 28.1** | 0.04 (6.41) |
| Union Parishad | | | | |
| - Partially satisfied | -19.1 | -36.47 | 17.37** | 0.06 (3.02) |
| **Reasons for not being able to access services (% of households who had tried but failed)** | | | | |
| - Due to poverty | -22.86 | 0 | -22.86** | 0.03 (6.80) |
| - Because of being female | 4.76 | -5.36 | 10.12** | 0.03 (3.58) |
| **Involvement with collective community activities? (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Yes | 1.2 | -5.2 | 6.4** | 0.02 (2.68) |
| **Female participation in household decision making (% of households)** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - Not at all | -1.35 | 1.4 | -2.75* | 0.01 (1.84) |
| - Can do alone | 12.09 | 9.7 | 2.39 | 0.04 (0.61) |
| - Along with husband | -15.23 | -13.6 | -1.63 | 0.04 (0.36) |
| - Along with household members | 4.4 | 2.5 | 1.9 | 0.02 (0.84) |
| **Female participation in decision making of village/community (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Not at all | -20.39 | -16.6 | -3.79 | 0.05 (0.77) |
| - Can do alone | 12.15 | 3.3 | 8.85** | 0.03 (2.80) |
| **Female participation in choosing family planning methods (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Can do alone | 0.59 | -4.5 | 5.09** | 0.02 (2.35) |
| **Female participation in decision making around children's' education (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Not at all | -1.26 | 4.1 | -5.36** | 0.02 (2.46) |
| - Can do alone | 2.51 | -5.1 | 7.61** | 0.03 (3.01) |
| **Female participation in decision making around children's' marriage (%of households)** | | | | |
| - Not at all | 0.62 | 4.1 | -3.48* | 0.02 (1.67) |
| - Can do alone | -0.01 | -4.4 | 4.39** | 0.02 (2.14) |
| **Female able to go to relatives house (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Can do alone | 3.43 | -0.9 | 4.33** | 0.02 (2.50) |
| **Female able to go to the hospital (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Not at all | -22.59 | -20.2 | -2.39 | 0.05 (0.45) |
| - Can do alone | 6.73 | 1.9 | 4.83** | 0.02 (2.00) |

**Table 10: Rural Development Program (Project A3)**

| **Indicators** | **Difference in difference (2014-2012)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Program** | **Compari-son** | **Double difference** | **Standard error (t-value)** |
| **Education (% of all members aged 15 years and above)** | | | | |
| - Average years of schooling (15 years of age and above) | 0.26 | 0.15 | 0.11** | 0.02 (4.68) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Land Ownership (in decimals)** | | | | |
| - Average homestead land | 0.68 | -0.25 | 0.93** | 0.03 (27.08) |
| - Average cultivable land | 1.87 | -0.15 | 2.02** | 0.15 (13.49) |
| - Permanently leased in khas land | 3.42 | -0.40 | 3.83** | 0.12 (30.86) |
| **Economic status - self assessment (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Poor | -5.02 | 5.18 | -10.2** | 0.03 (3.83) |
| **Savings of households (in Taka)[10]** | | | | |
| - Average amount of savings in last year | 1435.8 | 246.2 | 1189.6** | 194.98 (6.10) |
| **Proportion of household accessing services (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Public health service | 4.83 | -11.91 | 16.74** | 0.03 (0.03) |
| - Land office | 2.09 | 0.47 | 1.62 | 0.01 (0.01) |
| - Services from Union Parishads | 34.66 | 31.78 | 2.88 | 0.06 (0.06) |
| **Level of satisfaction (% of those households who accessed services)** | | | | |
| Public education | | | | |
| - Fully satisfied | 7.54 | -12.42 | 19.96** | 0.04 (5.37) |
| Land office | | | | |
| - Fully satisfied | 0.79 | 0 | 0.79 | 0.01 (1.3) |
| Court | | | | |
| - Fully satisfied | 10.03 | 0 | 10.03** | 0.02 (4.60) |
| **Household current involvement with club, organization, cooperative society, UP committees or any other organization (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Yes | 2.01 | -1.82 | 3.83** | 0.02 (2.33) |
| **If yes, degree of participation in those activities (% of those involved)** | | | | |
| - Key role in the decision making | 16 | -14.29 | 30.29** | 0.04 (7.04) |
| **Household current involvement in self-help groups (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Yes | 2.28 | -0.93 | 3.21** | 0.01 (2.25) |
| **If yes, degree of participation in this activity (% of those involved)** | | | | |
| - Participate in the discussion actively | 36.63 | 0 | 36.63** | 0.03 (10.48) |

[10] 1 US $ = 80 Taka

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Received training from NGO or other organization during last 5 years (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Yes | 3.67 | -1.01 | 4.68** | 0.02 (2.80) |
| **Female participation in village/community decision making (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Can do alone | 9.22 | 0 | 9.22** | 0.02 (4.39) |
| **Female participation in decision making around children's' education (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Can do alone | -10.46 | -19.36 | 8.9** | 0.04 (2.01) |
| **Female operating business/income generating activates (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Can do alone | 13.73 | 5.73 | 8.0** | 0.03 (2.38) |

**Table 11: Girl Power Program (Project A1)**

| **Indicators** | **Difference in Difference (2014-2012)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Program** | **Compari-son** | **Double difference** | **Standard error (t-value)** |
| **Schooling (years)** | | | | |
| Average completed years of schooling | 1.93 | 0.91 | 1.02** | 0.02 (44.92) |
| **Household expenditure (in Taka)** | | | | |
| Average monthly expenditure of the household | 2913.1 | 1775.0 | 1138.1** | 57.60 (19.75) |
| **Food condition (% of households)** | | | | |
| Always in deficit | -6.64 | -8.32 | 1.68 | 0.03 (0.54) |
| Sometimes in deficit | -31.77 | -13.75 | -18.02** | 0.05 (3.92) |
| **Water fetching (in minutes)** | | | | |
| Time (minutes) spent per day to collect water | -9.94 | -10.75 | 0.81** | 0.27 (3.00) |
| **Care giving (in minutes)** | | | | |
| Average time (in minutes) spent daily to care for children, ill and older members of household | 24.81 | 49.88 | -25.07** | 1.75 (14.34) |
| **Access to the following Media for information/communication (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| Cell phone | 0.37 | -5.51 | 5.88** | 0.03 (2.06) |
| Radio | 4.71 | 2.95 | 1.76 | 0.03 (0.52) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Consequences of early marriage (Multiple Responses - %)** | | | | |
| Harmful effect on health | 17.22 | 6.81 | 10.41** | 0.04 (2.93) |
| Adverse impact on education | 0.47 | -0.23 | 0.7 | 0.01 (1.06) |
| Can't look after family properly | 1.95 | -1.98 | 3.93** | 0.02 (2.43) |
| Can't take proper care of children | 3.03 | 2.52 | 0.51 | 0.02 (0.27) |
| **Types of risk for early pregnancy (Multiple Responses - %)** | | | | |
| Death of mother | 15.92 | 3.16 | 12.76** | 0.03 (4.17) |
| Death of children | 24.68 | 17.94 | 6.74 | 0.05 (1.44) |
| Poor health of mother and children | 33.2 | 18.96 | 14.24** | 0.05 (2.89) |
| Weak/sick child | 39.58 | 34.75 | 4.83 | 0.06 (0.86) |
| **Decision making around buying daily food and necessities for the household (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| Jointly with other male members of the household | 18.08 | 14.14 | 3.94 | 0.04 (0.93) |
| All members of the household | 22.03 | 11.11 | 10.92** | 0.04 (2.64) |
| **Able to go to the hospital (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| Can go alone | 20.41 | 7.22 | 13.19** | 0.04 (3.53) |
| **Able to go to get services from different sources (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| Can go alone | -0.96 | -4.9 | 3.94* | 0.02 (1.87) |
| **Received training from any NGO or other organization during last 2 years (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| Yes | 17.38 | -15.16 | 32.54** | 0.04 (7.61) |
| **Received training during last 2 years (no. of training days)** | | | | |
| Self-defence training | 1.26 | -1 | 2.26** | 0.01 (294.79) |
| Awareness and protection of right | 4.09 | 2.4 | 1.69** | 0.02 (93.07) |
| Management and technical skill | 5.66 | 1.86 | 3.8** | 0.01 (291.27) |
| **Types of violation of rights experienced (Multiple Responses - %)** | | | | |
| Negligence or discriminatory behaviour from family | 28.25 | 36.4 | -8.15 | 0.05 (1.49) |
| Physical torture | -10.5 | 12.6 | -23.1** | 0.04 (6.14) |
| Having involuntarily pregnancy or abortion | -1.3 | 0.46 | -1.76* | 0.01 (1.73) |
| Abuse for giving birth of a girl-child | 0 | 2.66 | -2.66* | 0.01 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | (1.79) |
| Mental torture/abuse | -11.57 | -16.54 | 4.97 | 0.04 (1.21) |
| Deprived of social status/dignity | -28 | -19.1 | -8.9* | 0.05 (1.84) |
| Faced social deprivation/discrimination | -21.3 | -19.1 | -2.2 | 0.05 (0.47) |

**Table 12: Unite for Body Rights – CHC Project (Household) (Project A4)**

| **Indicators** | **Difference in difference (2014-2012)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Program** | **Compari-son** | **Double difference** | **Standard Error (t-value)** |
| **Health status (% of all members)** | | | | |
| - Physically fit for work | 3.11 | -18.16 | 21.27** | 0.04 (5.28) |
| **Immunization (% of households with under 5 children)** | | | | |
| - % of household with children aged<5 years having vaccines for measles? | 20.02 | 4.1 | 15.92** | 0.04 (4.27) |
| **Food availability during last year (% of households)** | | | | |
| - Always in deficit | 2.33 | 1.12 | 1.21 | 0.02 (0.76) |
| - Sometimes in deficit | -2.45 | 11.87 | -14.32** | 0.03 (4.21) |
| **Response on the Quality of Service: Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC) (% of respondents who received services)** | | | | |
| - Good service delivery | 12.64 | -4.5 | 17.14** | 0.03 (5.14) |
| - Good behaviour of doctors/service providers | 12.54 | -4.5 | 17.04** | 0.03 (5.12) |
| - Good behaviour of the support staff | 7.03 | -4.5 | 11.53** | 0.03 (4.01) |
| - Cleanliness | 27.32 | -4.5 | 31.82** | 0.04 (7.79) |
| - Confidentiality of treatment | 24.27 | -4 | 28.27** | 0.04 (7.22) |
| - Good quality of food | 14.28 | -4 | 18.28** | 0.03 (5.40) |
| - Little waiting time | -1.24 | -4.5 | 3.26 | 0.02 (1.47) |
| - Availability of service providers | 4.17 | -4.5 | 8.67** | 0.03 (3.40) |
| - Availability of Medicines | -0.74 | -4 | 3.26 | 0.02 (1.60) |
| - Availability of medical equipment | 1.51 | -4 | 5.51** | 0.02 (2.56) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - Good quality of treatment | 4.17 | -4 | 8.17** | 0.02 (3.28) |
| **Response on Cordiality of CHC personnel (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Doctors | 21.11 | -5 | 26.11** | 0.04 (6.72) |
| - Nurses | 8 | -4.5 | 12.5** | 0.03 (4.22) |
| - Technicians | 5.08 | -4.5 | 9.58** | 0.03 (3.57) |
| - Ward boys | -4.2 | -4.5 | 0.3 | 0.03 (0.12) |
| - Administrative staff | 5.18 | -4.5 | 9.68** | 0.03 (3.60) |
| **Use of Antenatal care (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - % of respondents who needed antenatal care during pregnancy? | 29.44 | -7.58 | 37.02** | 0.04 (8.30) |
| **Post-Natal Care (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - % of respondent who needed post-natal care after delivery? | 38.35 | 2.4 | 35.95** | 0.04 (8.66) |

**Table 13: Unite for Body Rights – CHC Project (Adolescents) (Project A4)**

| **Indicators** | **Difference in difference (2014-2012)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Program** | **Compari-son** | **Double difference** | **Standard Error (t-value)** |
| **Awareness Related Information:** | | | | |
| **Opinion about early marriage (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Harmful | 9.2 | -7.74 | 16.94** | 0.03 (4.90) |
| **Consequences of early marriage (Multiple Responses, %)** | | | | |
| - Early pregnancy | 14.64 | -2.48 | 17.12** | 0.03 (5.40) |
| - Can't adjust with husband properly | 18.3 | 7.55 | 10.75** | 0.04 (2.70) |
| **Opinion about early pregnancy (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Risky | 9.19 | -7.04 | 16.23** | 0.03 (4.82) |
| **Types of risk for early pregnancy (Multiple Responses, %)** | | | | |
| - Death of mother | 1.9 | -27.11 | 29.01** | 0.04 (6.52) |
| - Death of children | 8.15 | -21.01 | 29.16** | 0.05 (6.47) |
| - Weak/sick child | 23.09 | 14.6 | 8.49** | 0.05 (1.78) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Opinion about dowry during marriage (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Shameful/unlawful | 7.04 | -16.68 | 23.72** | 0.04 (5.72) |
| **Opinion about birth registration (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Necessary | 2.86 | -14.07 | 16.93** | 0.04 (4.67) |
| **Mode of washing hands after defecation (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - With soap | 3.54 | -11.83 | 15.37** | 0.03 (4.44) |
| **Is there any law to protect from violence against women? (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Yes | 12.6 | 3.06 | 9.54** | 0.03 (3.07) |
| **Opinion about comparative wage of men and women in the work place (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Both equally | 5.67 | -13.85 | 19.52** | 0.04 (5.11) |
| **Opinion about boys and girls food consumption in the family (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Both equally | -0.01 | -13.05 | 13.04** | 0.03 (3.98) |
| **Opinion about distribution of inherited properties between men and women (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Both equally | 82.87 | 58.86 | 24.01** | 0.06 (4.27) |
| **Opinion about education provision for boys and girls (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Both equally | 97.86 | 84.15 | 13.71** | 0.04 (3.68) |
| **Opinion about medical treatment for boys and girls (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Both equally | 0.66 | -10.3 | 10.96** | 0.03 (3.63) |
| **Opinion about comparative participation of boys and girls in local association/club/committee (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Both equally | 67.9 | 57.64 | 10.26** | 0.06 (1.70) |
| **Knowledge about Family Planning Methods (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| % of respondents who had heard about family planning methods | 20.58 | -10.25 | 30.83** | 0.04 (7.10) |
| **Views on usefulness of family planning methods: (Multiple responses, %)** | | | | |
| - Increase the solvency of the households | 6.86 | -24.48 | 31.34** | 0.05 (6.77) |
| - Advantageous to educate the children | -9.08 | 11.7 | -20.78** | 0.04 (5.39) |
| - Children have better health and nutrition | 3.89 | -0.37 | 4.26** | 0.02 (2.61) |
| - Mother's health and nutrition is ensured | 24.14 | 17.58 | 6.56 | 0.05 (1.31) |
| **Views about problems of family planning methods: (Multiple responses, %)** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - Side effects | 8.6 | 33.6 | -25.0** | 0.05 (4.91) |
| - Risk of infertility | 19.68 | 35.7 | -16.02** | 0.06 (2.86) |
| - Husband does not like them | 13.01 | 31.03 | -18.02** | 0.05 (3.45) |
| **Opinion about giving birth in quick succession (Multiple responses, %)** | | | | |
| - Benefits of a large family | -8.91 | 3.89 | -12.8** | 0.03 (4.37) |
| - Leads to poor health of mother and children | 10.43 | -10.21 | 20.64** | 0.04 (5.43) |
| - Economic burden | 27.97 | -3.27 | 31.24** | 0.04 (7.93) |
| - Inadequate birth spacing | 23.97 | 13.48 | 10.49** | 0.05 (2.22) |
| - Don't know | 1.52 | 12.92 | -11.4** | 0.03 (3.36) |
| **Knowledge about specific family planning methods (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Pill/edible tablet | -3 | -22.6 | 19.6** | 0.04 (4.58) |
| - Emergency pill | 4.66 | 17.38 | -12.72** | 0.04 (3.15) |
| - IUD/Copper T | 26.72 | -3.72 | 30.44** | 0.04 (7.72) |
| - Injection/Depo | 11.13 | -7.75 | 18.88** | 0.04 (5.26) |
| - Condom | 17.06 | -1.7 | 18.76** | 0.03 (5.83) |
| - Implant/Norplant | 28.07 | -4.61 | 32.68** | 0.04 (8.00) |
| - Safe period | 14.81 | -8.48 | 23.29** | 0.04 (5.98) |
| - Azol | 4.97 | -2.8 | 7.77** | 0.02 (3.31) |
| - Ligation/Tubectomy | 10.08 | 4.28 | 5.8* | 0.03 (1.88) |
| - Vasectomy/NSV | 27.62 | -11.19 | 38.81** | 0.05 (8.31) |
| **Knowledge of options available to deal with unexpected pregnancy (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - MR /Menstruation regularization | 13.25 | -2.84 | 16.09** | 0.03 (5.15) |
| - Abortion | 4.91 | -33.81 | 38.72** | 0.05 (7.90) |
| - Consultation with doctors | -12.79 | 5 | -17.79** | 0.04 (5.27) |
| - Do not know | -5.31 | 28.8 | -34.11** | 0.05 (7.20) |
| **MR Related Awareness (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| % of the respondents who have heard about MR | 5.71 | -12 | 17.71** | 0.04 (4.86) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Knowledge about minimum period (weeks) of going for MR after becoming pregnant (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Up to 8 to 10 weeks when provided by specialized provider (correct response) | -1.47 | -13.08 | 11.61** | 0.03 (3.41) |
| - Others (incorrect response) | -2.75 | -5 | 2.25 | 0.02 (0.91) |
| - Do not know | 4.13 | 18.08 | -13.95** | 0.04 (3.44) |
| **Knowledge about the source of MR services (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Qualified doctor | -21.33 | -60.91 | 39.58** | 0.06 (6.90) |
| - Nurse/Paramedic | -37.87 | -10.45 | -27.42** | 0.05 (5.66) |
| - Family welfare centre (FWC) | -2.53 | 0 | -2.53** | 0.01 (2.04) |
| - Trained health worker | -3.88 | -10.44 | 6.56** | 0.03 (1.97) |
| - Pharmacist | 0.64 | -2.9 | 3.54** | 0.02 (2.03) |
| - Others | 55.41 | 87.5 | -32.09** | 0.05 (6.33) |
| - CHC | 8.92 | 0 | 8.92** | 0.02 (3.97) |
| **Source of knowledge about MR (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - CHC-UBR training | 35.92 | -17.1 | 53.02** | 0.05 (10.08) |
| - School | 14.08 | 14.75 | -0.67 | 0.04 (0.15) |
| - Friends/family | -5.49 | 3.53 | -9.02** | 0.03 (3.56) |
| - Community meetings | -15.8 | -2.9 | -12.9** | 0.03 (3.90) |
| - Health centre | -1.97 | 9.68 | -11.65** | 0.03 (3.79) |
| - Health worker | 8.59 | 4.79 | 3.8 | 0.03 (1.25) |
| - NGO | 1.79 | 0 | 1.79* | 0.01 (1.71) |
| - Poster/leaflet | 0.45 | 22.17 | -21.72** | 0.04 (5.33) |
| **Awareness about STD, HIV and Safe Sex (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| % of the respondents knows about STD | 15.21 | -12.37 | 27.58** | 0.04 (3.89) |
| % of the respondents knows about HIV | 1.34 | -30.98 | 32.32** | 0.04 (0.35) |
| % of the respondents knows about safe sex | 29.35 | -9.81 | 39.16** | 0.04 (7.94) |
| **Actions when faced with problems related to puberty, sexual and reproductive health (Multiple response, %)** | | | | |
| - consult with CHC/UBR representative | 49.19 | -6.6 | 55.79** | 0.05 (12.08) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - discuss with class mates/friends | 14.05 | -11.72 | 25.77** | 0.04 (6.20) |
| - discuss with family member | 5.9 | -7.98 | 13.88** | 0.03 (4.31) |
| - discuss with others | 5.54 | 1.97 | 3.57 | 0.02 (1.59) |
| - Not to discuss with anybody and keep quite | -2.1 | 0 | -2.1* | 0.01 (1.86) |
| - Do not know | -3.93 | 20.89 | -24.82** | 0.04 (5.86) |
| **Is there any institution available in your area which provides advice/counselling services related to puberty, sexual and reproductive health (% of respondents)** | | | | |
| - Yes | 31.15 | 6.88 | 24.27** | 0.04 (5.51) |
| **Types of institutions available (Multiple responses, %)** | | | | |
| - CHC/UBR | 50.12 | -74.1 | 124.22** | 0.06 (21.42) |
| - Public health centre | 45.34 | 46.77 | -1.43 | 0.06 (0.23) |
| - Private organization | 21 | -0.76 | 21.76** | 0.03 (6.56) |
| - Others | 6.1 | 0 | 6.1** | 0.02 (3.23) |
| - Do not know | -29.03 | 9.59 | -38.62** | 0.05 (8.43) |

### *5.3 Capacity Development*

This was measured between baseline and end line across the following 5 organisational capabilities on a 1(low) to 5(high) scale developed by ECDPM:

- To adapt and renew
- To act and commit
- To deliver on development objectives
- To relate to external stakeholders
- To achieve coherence

**Table 14: Summary of aggregated scores across the 5 capabilities for each organisation**

| Organisation | Baseline aggregated score 2012 | End line aggregated score 2014 | Capability Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| PAB | 4.12 | 3.96 | Decrease of 0.16 |
| CDD | 3.7 | 4.5 | Increase of 0.80 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| AOSED | 2.8 | 2.98 | Increase of 0.18 |
| SUPRO | 3.18 | 3.74 | Increase of 0.56 |
| VERC | 3.4 | 3.88 | Increase of 0.48 |

For Practical Action Bangladesh and AOSED, the difference between these scores over the time period is insignificant. While more significant for CDD, SUPRO and VERC, there are internal variations. The MFS II financial contribution to CDD and VERC was 4-6% and 3% respectively over the period. Only SUPRO results with 95% funding from MFS II can therefore be realistically attributed to MFS II support via Impact Alliance (Oxfam-Novib). The qualified successes of CDD and VERC are more attributed to longer standing relationships with donors: for CDD the ICCO Alliance (Light for the World); and for VERC, CordAid.

While there is less change to attribute for the cases of Practical Action Bangladesh and AOSED, each has a specific story. Practical Action Bangladesh is part of Practical Action UK and thus supported closely as part of that international structure, requiring less organisational capacity development support from WASH Alliance (WASTE), and indeed the internal structure of WASH Alliance, with Simavi in the lead, was according to some in Practical Action Bangladesh, difficult to navigate. AOSED was 100% funded by MFS II at the beginning of the period, but had its funding discontinued in 2013. It claims to have experienced problems of capacity support from Simavi – a claim Simavi contends. What is clear is that AOSED was in need of strong and sustained capacity development and it is not clear that the appropriate levels were provided. Simavi has continued its capacity development support (although it has discontinued funds) by recruiting a VSO volunteer for AOSED. It is too early to see how successful this will be.

Thus from these 5 cases, the positive contribution story for MFS II really only applies to SUPRO in terms of linking capacity outcomes to direct capacity building interventions. However the positive CDD and VERC outcomes can be plausibility linked to longer standing relations with Dutch agencies (for CDD LFTW prior to ICCO, and CordAid respectively), with MFS II providing the opportunity for a continuing Dutch agency engagement, albeit minor in terms of funding. The success of CDD and VERC in diversifying their funding sources and thus enhancing their sustainability can be seen as a function of long term support from inception to a weaning off dependency. This conclusion is also consistent with the notion that change is more a function of long term relationships rather than recent, shorter ones, and that the creation of stable, flexible partnerships may be much more conducive to

capacity development than more targeted capacity building – at least for more well-established and mature organisations such as those covered in this evaluation.

Turning to SUPRO, there were positive responses from its major stakeholders, evidenced through improved relationships with local government across the country and evidence of joint events, campaigns, etc. (see Tax campaign and SUPRO members joining government health and education committees). SUPRO has also made steady progress over time both in terms of its own institutional development but also its impact in its priority areas. It is worth noting the slow steady growth of partners, and that the founders and majority of Council members are not from the Dhaka NGO elite, but represent the 45 districts of Bangladesh.

With this mixed picture, what overall conclusions can be drawn?

With the exception of SUPRO and AOSED, much of the MFS II funding was a small proportion of the total incomes of the local partners (SPOs), though often a function of longer term, prior relationships with Dutch aid via INGOs. Thus in this period, the SPOs were already positively reflecting diversification of income flows and thus sustainability by reducing the risk of over-dependency. While this pattern may undermine the desire to measure and attribute the impact of MFS II over a two year (2012-2014) precise period, the value of Dutch aid itself is not necessarily undermined.

It seems clear that the 2 year time period for measurement and attribution of change could not be expected to reveal significant impact upon the 5 capabilities, since these two years are for some SPOs nested within longer relations going back a decade or more, like between VERC and Cordaid. Cordaid is credited by informants as having introduced new ideas to VERC, especially a shift from group to community based strategy. Again this is not a negative statement on MFS II per se, merely a logical observation that in the context of longer standing relationships, only incremental shifts could possibly be detected. For the larger measured increases, there are aggregate capability improvements between 14 (VERC) and 21% (CDD), but the most reliable attribution is SUPRO at 17% due to its funding dependency.

A further problem derived from the measurement methodology is again not necessarily a poor reflection on the CFA-SPO relationship. The MFS II templates for capacity development measurement (from within a Theory of Change perspective) assumed that specific objectives were consciously elaborated for each Dutch supported project, along with the related assumption that all projects fitted at least one or more of the three key areas (components): contribution of MDGs; civil society strengthening; and SPO capacity development. Many of

the funded projects did not actually have concrete goals in these areas, especially the second two. Thus under capacity development, few of the cases had mutually agreed objectives sufficiently explicit to permit confident contribution analysis to an objective. There is simply a loose correlation between some SPO improvement and some CFA participation via present MFS II funding and history.

Interestingly there is some evidence of reverse capacity development where an SPO was part of another well-established INGO than the MFS II CFA. Thus CDD draws strongly for its approach from its connections to ADD, and has thus been able to share ideas about practice with its CFA—Light for the World. At the same time, CDD has been assisted in proposal writing, which has improved its non-MFS II funding during the measurement period. Practical Action Bangladesh, as part of Practical Action UK, has access to wider experience and has been able to feed that back to WASH Alliance and WASTE. At the same time, WASTE has contributed some innovative ideas such as the diamond model of business on the faecal sludge and management services. The Practical Action Bangladesh connection to WASTE has assisted the Practical Action Bangladesh profile and contributed to its access to both government and Melinda Gates Foundation funds.

### *5.4 Civil Society Strengthening*

In comparison with other funders who do not incorporate a strengthening civil society component to their funding, the MFS II scheme is largely recognized as a more holistic way of influencing local stakeholders' mindsets and institutions. At the same time, the most significant changes observed within the SPOs themselves across the two-year period are hard to interpret because achieving observable impact through civil society strengthening requires both sufficient money and time. Therefore the major findings highlighted below, based on the two rounds of CIVICUS scoring, must be interpreted carefully and contextualized.

In general, as Table 15 shows, the funded SPOs scored increasingly high on *civic engagement*, *practice of values* and *perception of impact* with average scores improving from 1.3 to 1.5, 1.6 to 2 and 1.8 to 2. The overall absence of changes in the *level of organization* indicates that the SPOs have reached a level of maturity and have stable relationships with other relevant actors. This lack of improvement may also suggest that the SPOs, on average, are not proactive in engaging with a large number of networks and umbrella institutions.

**Table 15: Summary of CIVICUS scoring against 5 aggregate headings 2012-2014**

| | Average 2012 | Average 2014 |
|---|---|---|
| **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT** | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| **LEVEL OF ORGANISATION** | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| **PRACTICE OF VALUES** | 1.6 | 2 |
| **PERCEPTION OF IMPACT** | 1.8 | 2 |
| **ENVIRONMENT** | 1.6 | 1 |

Table 16 summarizes the average CIVICUS scoring per SPO, and detailed scoring by each of the 16 SPOs for each sub-indicator of the 5 aggregate indicators can be found at Appendix 1. The range of interventions delivered by the 16 SPOs is broad. Some SPOs (for example the Girl Power Project implemented by ACD, Aparajeyo and BNWLA or the health services and activities delivered by Caritas, CSS, DSK, FPAB or VARD) seek to transform mindsets in order to achieve better gender equity through direct service provision. Other SPOs adopt a rights-based approach to transform political structures and enforce constitutional rights (AOSED, CDD, ADD, SUPRO and UTTARAN). The former are often referred to as 'intermediation' SPOs in that they aim to fill the gaps in public services whereas the latter, 'mobilisation' SPOs adopt a far-reaching strategy that aims to compel duty bearers to be more accountable to citizens in the longer-term. Furthermore our summary analysis indicates that SPOs that are "owned" by their representative members (normally under the guise of a "grassroots platform" or a membership based organisation) score higher than other SPOs. This we argue is because the processes of including target groups in the analysis are easily implemented and costs associated with it are lower.

However, unlike the capacity development component the 'strengthening civil society' component's outcome is less under the control of the SPO and more likely to be affected by the external environment in which the SPO operates. This has been a major factor in the precise period of this study as indicated in the 'relevant context' section of this overview paper. This externality is unambiguously and consistently revealed by the drop across the 16 SPOs in the disaggregated and aggregated *environment* scores from 1.6 to 1.0.

Even without political disturbances and violence, Bangladesh is a difficult environment for new NGOs or mature NGOs willing to work on new issues. Well-known NGOs have long-established personal relationships built across civil society to policy-making, and the strength of these relations can create barriers to entry for newer NGOs who want to build ties across different dimensions of civil society. This reflects some element of the social capital problem

whereby the intense strength felt by those on the 'inside' results in those outside being excluded.

However laid on top of this inherent structural problem of the exclusion of new entrant SPOs, the conditions for a flourishing civil society in general and the NGO environment in particular has been affected by political turmoil and disturbance affecting the country since September 2013 in the run-up to the January 2014 'election' in which the opposition coalition refused to participate because a neutral caretaker government had not been installed. This disruption took the form of *hartals* and blockades and street violence alongside killings not only of political adversaries but also civil society actors (such as NGO activists, leaders and journalists). This situation has returned one year later as we finalise the report (see 'relevant context' above). Significantly, the closing down of political space means that freedom to critique policy and openly advocate on rights issues is curtailed. Public criticism can be perceived as an attack upon the government. Thus SPOs supported by MFS II have had to be very cautious in pursuing their missions over the last 2 years because they fear reprisals if their civil society behaviour is identified as pro—opposition or anti-government. Certainly we conclude that the tense political climate at local and national levels has affected the room for manoeuvre for some of the SPOs in our sample, especially those with a more mobilization agenda (SUPRO, ASK, AOSED, Bangladesh News Network for example).

Under these conditions there is a core problem of donor resolve and morality. There has been a long standing problem in Bangladesh of donor volatility in the context of partner NGOs which take risks in pursuit of rights based agendas. In a hostile socio-political environment at local as well as national levels, where vested interests around rent-seeking are challenged and exposed, opponents of NGOs and CSOs assess the sustainability of their civil society actions. They ask: Will those annoying NGOs survive? Can individuals be bought off? Is their donor support precarious and thus their agendas and challenges able to be discounted? If long term, stable support is not signalled and actually available, then donors can rightly be accused of unethically exposing their local partners to high levels of risk in the pursuit of donor agendas. Donors of course are insulated from the same risk.

It is not surprising to see that a few SPOs scorings have declined as for some of them the funding has either stopped completely or been significantly reduced (i.e. BNN, AOSED and Practical Action Bangladesh). The interruption of financial support in some cases when the SPO was highly dependent on MFS II, significantly affected the internal capacities of SPOs and their ability to plan strategically and engage with relevant stakeholders. We also need to factor in a more 'normal' institutional cycle in which funding supports more obvious early

activity (e.g. participating in or conducting civil society studies, data gathering and production of dissemination materials), followed by less fund dependent activity in later stages of sponsorship like dissemination through ongoing presence of staff in relevant networks as well as workshops, seminars and conferences.

Thus the role of the CFAs and the nature of their relationships and commitment levels to the funded SPOs have a strong influence upon the efficacy of their financial contribution towards the expected outcomes of the partner SPO. A long-term, regular, flexible grant support combined with co-operative and mutually supportive long-term relationships not only creates a favourable learning environment where SPOs can learn and develop sustainable strategies (for example Light For The World and CDD), but it also signals strength and continued presence to both cooperating and hostile actors in their field of operation. On the other hand, a tenuous and unpredictable 'distance' between the CFA and its SPO can perversely signal precariousness rather than independence and self-determination, thus weakening rather than strengthening the civil society context for that SPO. Tenuous and unpredictable flows of funding and other support can also entail weak monitoring and follow-up systems that support the strategic thinking of the SPO management. Uncertain financial relations, a lack of longer-term commitment to a partnership, and insufficient high-quality strategic support can jeopardize the SPOs' capacities to plan sustainable activities and increase their 'political' reliance on donors thereby putting them at risk. We have observed elements of this in AOSED and Practical Action Bangladesh.

Shifting the focus of analysis from the risky, politicised rights domain towards the more technical, apolitical end of the policy agenda, there is an attribution problem in trying to trace the impact of small financial support upon big expectations for policy impact—the leverage efficiency calculation. For our sample, the percentage of MFS II funding to its SPOs has often been diluted by multiple sources of funding and consequently difficult to track for impact. For an SPO to have impact upon either the strength of civil society activity in its sector, or upon government policy more directly, long term relations between its staff and other established stakeholders in its 'environment' is required. Those staff need to be well educated as well as activists, they need to have credibility in order to have reputations which can be converted to influence. They have to be respected professionals, and thus adequately and securely rewarded. That entails significant levels of funding, often way beyond the MFS II/CFA flow. And if the NGO is isolated (geographically) or new to the field there is a need for further financial support to sustain and deepen impact (for example ACD). Ambitions in most of these SPO sectors cannot be realised on the cheap. And small donors cannot expect to exercise much leverage, unless their present reduced funding has followed on from much

longer and generous relationships. The Dutch relationship to Nijera Kori could be considered in this way.

The openness of the institutional landscape in specific thematic sectors can vary significantly and therefore determine NGO outcome achievements in terms of influence on other institutions' practices and policy. For example working in the sector of gender issues (such as ACD and Aparajeyo) might be slightly more *open* to changes than budget and taxation issues, such as SUPRO for example (which clearly challenge long-established structures and mindsets of the political elites). It is interesting in the presently charged political climate that the governing party, despite closing down the space for civil society and other democratic processes, remains strongly focussed upon poverty eradication and reaching other MDGs. For the first time, a background paper on extreme poverty has been requested as an input into the upcoming 7th Five Year Plan. Thus service delivering NGOs find they have more uncontroversial room for manoeuvre. The partial exception is that this government frowns upon micro-credit and MFIs, politically pursuing the Grameen Bank for malfeasance while grudgingly permitting the microfinance sector to continue. There has been a past history of pro-poor budget critique undertaken by campaigning NGOs (Proshika and Unnayan Shammanay) which has contributed to a receptivity about poverty eradication, but contemporary budget criticism is now a more difficult prospect.

In terms of the primary MFS II concern with civil society strengthening, SPO mobilisation and intermediation activities are mainly focussed upon participating in campaigns as sole or co-organisers, on convening stakeholders from across different parts of civil society and government often at local levels (districts, *upazilas* and *union*- the primary level of local government), on attending seminars and conferences which attract press coverage, alongside actual service delivery in some sectors. Not many of them produce longer term reports, op-eds and published studies based upon analysis of their frontline experience. They are not research organisations, communicating in different ways to a wider population. Many would like to have this capacity and extend this element of their portfolio, publishing from their knowledge and experience in working with civil society in particular thematic sectors and geographical locations. There is also the rapidly expanding potential of social media, although even now the governing party is trying to close down some of this social media space, using the threat of terrorism as an alibi. For 'terrorism' read 'opposition parties' denied legitimate political space to organise, protest and compete.

Finally there is the SPO size variable which reappears in the capacity building summary analysis below. Large-scale, international NGOs (as SPOs for MFS II like Practical Action

Bangladesh) tend to be well-connected with other large scale funding agencies (either INGOs or donors through core funding or projects) and therefore have high standard reporting and accountability mechanisms since relationships with donors tend to be highly formalized. Even large, indigenous NGOs like Nijera Kori (included only in the MDG component) have long experience as part of wider networks positively affecting their ability to participate in wider forums which include the influencing of government and donors themselves as well as their peers across civil society.

In smaller NGOs, a handful of senior staff carry the capacity burden to develop their networks and be active on national discussion platforms. A lot of their fund raising capacity, practice of values and advocacy influence relies upon this small, often 'founding' leadership for mission achievement. Thus the ability of SPOs to use MFSII funding is critical to gather sufficient internal resources to retain good quality strategic managers. These smaller SPOs rely heavily upon them to maintain and develop relevant capacity to engage in nation-wide dialogues and build long-term personal linkages with other institutions. This is essential for their sustainability and the effectiveness of their intervention either as mobilisation or intermediation SPOs. In another language, there is a single point of business failure for the smaller SPOs, and over the last few decades, we have witnessed this problem many times over.

**Table 16: SPOs civicus aggregated changes 2012-2014**

| ACD | ADD | AOSED | Aparajeyo | ASK | BNWLA | CARITAS | CDD | CSS | DSK | FPAB | BNN | Practical Action | SUPRO | UTTARAN | VARD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| +0.2 | 0 | -0.4 | 0 | +1.2 | +0.4 | 0 | +0.2 | +0.1 | 0 | -0.2 | -0.2 | +0.2 | 0 | 0 | -0.2 |

## 6. Overall Assessment (answering evaluation questions by component)

### *6.1 Conclusion 1: Conclusions to the three components*

#### 6.1.1 MDG Component

*Relevance of the Results*

Achieving improvements in livelihoods; access to services and institutions; and women empowerment were among the main objectives of projects A2 and A3. As we have observed from both the analyses of changes over time and difference-in-difference, both projects have been quite successful in achieving the desired objectives. In this respect, the results have been relevant to the objectives of projects.

For project A1, the objectives were to empower girls and young women by raising awareness, increasing participation, improving rights and nurturing empowerment. In terms of achieving stated objectives, the project results are very positive and relevant. Similarly, results achieved under project A4 are also relevant to the objectives stated for the project.

*Efficiency of the Projects*

Before evaluating the efficiency of the projects, we will review the intended outputs of the projects. Table 17 presents the outputs per project. An examination of the intended and actual outputs for each of the projects reveals that all of the planned outputs have been produced/achieved by the respective SPOs/NGOs. The implementation of project activities has also been successful.

As we have also observed from results, the outputs produced/achieved under the projects have also been quite successful in achieving the desired objectives of the projects. This indicates a level of project efficiency.

Footnote 5 in the Technical Report explains in some detail some of the challenges of targeting. In our analysis, it is clear that there is an inevitable slip in targeting. This is not uncommon in Bangladesh. So for example for project A2, we found that not all beneficiaries were poor or extreme poor at baseline. This could be seen as a case of mis-targeting. On the other hand we also saw in Project A3 that projects can have positive externalities with benefits reaching people who were not necessarily targeted. This is a contrasting example to project A3. In our view, the question of targeting is problematic anyway. In many cases, the

difference between an eligible beneficiary and an ineligible one is, in livelihood terms, quite negligible.

**Table 17: Outputs per Project**

| Projects | Outputs |
|---|---|
| Project A2: Sustainable Livelihoods of the Poor Women | 1. Formation of women *samities* (groups).<br>2. Organizing meetings and sessions to raise awareness among the target group beneficiaries on food security, disaster preparedness, and hygiene related issues.<br>3. Providing training to the beneficiary women on livestock rearing, vegetable gardening, nursery development, seed management, organic farming and leadership management.<br>4. Women group members received capital support. |
| Project A3: Rural Development Program | 1. Formation of landless groups.<br>2. Providing training to the landless groups on various issues.<br>3. Conduct joint economic activities.<br>4. Providing major empowerment support activities to the landless groups. |
| Project A4: Unite for Body Rights – CHC Project | 1. Number of SRH outpatient treated.<br>2. Number of SRH inpatient treated.<br>3. CSE (Comprehensive Sexuality Education) groups formed.<br>4. CSE sessions organized in schools. |
| Project A1: Girl Power Program | 1. Groups of girls and young women identified as the target group.<br>2. Organizing training for the girls and young women on "life skills".<br>3. Organizing mass awareness through TFD (Theatre for Development) live performance.<br>4. Organizing child rights and child protection orientation sessions for government officials, local government representatives and CBOs. |

*Discussion*

Before discussing the design and suitability of the projects, it is important to note the relation between evaluation period (i.e. 2012 through to 2014) and project implementation. Some of the projects started and were completed before the MFS II study (e.g., Projects A2 and A3), while others (e.g., Projects A1 and A4) started before the study but will be completed after the study deadline. So, we should bear in mind that the baseline does not fully capture the baseline situation as most of the projects started before the baseline survey was conducted (i.e. the baseline might already have captured some project impact) and the final follow up survey also does

not fully capture the project impact since two of the projects will continue beyond 2014. So the interpretation of results, design and suitability should be considered with this in mind.

All four projects have been/are being implemented properly and have also produced positive results for their beneficiaries. All the projects were relevant and suitable for the environment, although it was challenging to implement projects A1 and A4 because of the sensitive nature of the interventions. Project A2 has been implemented in an adverse geographical region of the country (i.e. coastal areas). Project A3 has also demonstrated the positive impact of social mobilization on livelihoods improvements and MDG outcomes.

Regarding impact evaluation, our conclusion is that impact evaluations need to be designed alongside project design so that randomized controls as well as proper baseline and follow up surveys can be conducted in order to capture the fuller impact of implemented projects.

***MDG Evaluation Conclusion***

The results obtained through the present evaluation of four MDG projects can be summarized as follows:

- The projects have been/are being implemented properly;
- All the projects produced good and positive results;
- Some key results are attributable to project intervention;
- The results obtained are relevant not only to project objectives, but also to the country context;
- The projects were implemented efficiently;
- The interventions provide important insights into the wider attempt to reduce poverty in Bangladesh. If anything more interventions like the ones carried out by the SPOS will be needed in the future.

Answers are also provided for the evaluation questions on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all” and 10 being “completely agree” with the following statements, for the projects under consideration.

**Table 18: Summary Evaluation Scores: MDG component**

| Statements regarding Evaluation Questions | Projects | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A2 | A3 | A1 | A4 |
| The project was well designed | 10 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| The project was implemented as designed | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| The project reached all its objectives | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| The observed results are attributable to the project interventions | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 |
| The observed results are relevant to the project beneficiaries | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| The project was implemented efficiently | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 |

### 6.1.2 Capacity Development Component

To remind the reader, a total of five projects were pre-selected for evaluation under the capacity development sub-component. The concluding findings in relation to the evaluations questions are below.

*Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) Findings*

Overall the capacity development support provided to CDD has been effective and relevant. The Capability organisational assessment compared to the baseline assessment has highlighted improvement in all five capabilities and the organisational time line has highlighted growth in the organisation. The impact grid stories of change and contribution analysis have indicated impact of its work which can be traced back to the MFS II funding.

The strategic relationship between CDD and LFTW - two organisations with similar goals, vision and Theory of Change - has contributed to the appropriate provision of capacity building support that is both useful and strategically well placed. There was also a reverse Capacity Development process from CDD to LFTW that strengthens the value of their long term strategic partnership. This relationship is all the more remarkable in that LFTW only provides between 4-6% of the overall budget of CDD. The two organisations have a strong long term partnership where both see they are learning from each other as both bring strengths to the relationship.

*An Organisation for Socio-Economic Development (AOSED) Findings*

Despite a positive start, the relationship between Simavi of the Dutch Wash Alliance and AOSED has not ended well. The decision not to continue funding has been a difficult one and has led to a situation in which both organisations have quite different views on the reasons for

discontinuation. In terms of capacity building at the time of the end study, one would have to conclude that the decision to discontinue funding has negatively impacted on AOSED's capacity. However Simavi have recently contracted a VSO from the Netherlands to work with AOSED on its organisational strengthening. This had just started at the time of the evaluation, and therefore we are unable to comment on the suitability or effectiveness of such support. That AOSED managed to obtain funding and support from other donors and research organisations to continue its work and that it survived a real funding crisis is credit to the organisation and its leadership.

*Practical Action Bangladesh Findings*

The Capacity development support from the Dutch Wash Alliance has been to the Bangladesh Wash Alliance of which Practical Action Bangladesh is a member. As indicated above, Practical Action Bangladesh also received other capacity development inputs – some of which were specific to the organisation. However the number of staff members who accessed Wash Alliance support was very small and this has implications in terms of impact on the organisation overall. Practical Action Bangladesh receives the majority of its capacity development support from Practical Action HQ and the Practical Action Alliance family. This is the major source of capacity development inputs for Practical Action Bangladesh, and any WASTE capacity development contribution has to be understood in this light. As indicated above however, staff at Practical Action Bangladesh were appreciative of some WASTE support such as the diamond business model developed by WASTE on the faecal sludge management services.

It has been difficult to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the capacity development support provided by WASTE and further support from the Wash Alliance. There was no real significant change between baseline and end-line assessments with a slight overall decrease of 0.6%. The narratives however do signal some improvements in the capabilities where scores have reduced. What was identified throughout the end-line self-assessment was that Practical Action Bangladesh has not particularly solved any of the problems identified in the baseline. The researchers would like to note this may be due to a weakness in the methodology when there is a high staff turnover and no real continuity between baseline and end line assessments.

Practical Action is a large international NGO based in the UK. Although the UK based staff who work on the MFS II project are aware of what the Dutch funding supports, once you

interview other members of staff particularly at senior level you find that this is one of many projects they have to oversee. That is not to say they were not cooperative, they provided any information requested however the real understanding of the MFS II funded projects lies in the heads of a few key project staff.

*Sushasoner Jonny Procharavizan (SUPRO) Findings*

SUPRO is an impressive organisation comprising of a large number of members who contribute their time and other resources to SUPRO's programme, whilst also gaining from the capacity building provided through SUPRO. They have had significant successes in several of their major campaigns including improved accountability of various local government programs and the fair tax campaign. The support from Oxfam/Novib has been crucial to this success - both the financial support plus enabling SUPRO to link to international campaigners on tax for example. The only concern is whether SUPRO can find alternative support post MFSII, given its excessive financial reliance on Oxfam/Novib.

*Village Education Centre (VERC) Findings*

VERC is credited for leading the way for many years in Bangladesh on informal education. Cordaid has been an active supporter for many years and VERC will point to many areas of key successes brought about through that support over this time in helping them develop organisationally and in their mode of work. However most of these changes were in the past and although VERC recognises this, it is hard to see how the same level of interaction could have been continued by Cordaid once the financial and other support were significantly reduced under MFS II, to barely 3% of VERC's overall income. Although nominally designated for capacity building there is little hard evidence that this was actually spent as a designated fund, rather than a general contribution to their positive capacity building work with communities, teachers, and local officials.

### 6.1.3 Civil Society Strengthening Component

It is difficult to summarise findings of strengthening civil society across 16 SPOs carrying out quite a diverse range of projects and activities. As indicated above, we have seen across our 16 sample SPOs an average increase in civic engagement, practice of values and perception of impact. There has been no movement on level of organisation and a decrease in the score related to environment (see Table 17).

The lack of change in the score related to the level of organisation is not a major concern. Many of the SPOs funded under MFS II are mature organisations and have good established practices. The decline in the environment score is more difficult to interpret. On the whole, it

seems that the low score picks up on the fact that the SPOs are not involved in studies on civil society in Bangladesh. To a great extent this is beyond their control. It highlights however a real lack of investment across the development sector for good quality research into civil society activity in Bangladesh. Given the overall political context we have sketched out above (see context section), we can only highlight the need to support and the value of more research into this area. Included in the same score is a sub-item on influencing civil society. Here the scores across the SPOs are generally low (with few exceptions across SPOs). Our sense is that the move from mobilising orientations to intermediation ones also means that SPOs may become less interested in certain aspects of civil society strengthening. This is not unique to MFS II supported SPOs. Finally the low score on environment inevitably reflects aspects of the hostile context in which all the SPOs operate.

The increased average scores across civic engagement, practice of values and perception of impact are quite remarkable given the context over the past 2 years. The environment for SPOs is particularly hostile. What the three themes have in common is SPO outreach and external engagement with target groups, other IOs, public and private sector representatives. Attributing the positive change to MFS11 funding however is not easy for a number of reasons. First, most if not all the SPOs do not separate out their budgets and activities so that the strengthening civil society component can be isolated from other activities. Second, as indicated above, the levels of funding to SPOs are in most cases relatively small and the amount then dedicated to strengthening civil society even smaller. This again is not necessarily a bad approach to follow. In many cases, it makes perfect sense to make contributions to mature SPOs who can be effective in their interventions. It does however make the question of attribution difficult. Whilst we have some cases where the level of funding makes attribution calculations slightly easier (e.g. SUPRO), in other cases, MFS II has bought into significant civil society strengthening leverage despite making relatively small investments.

Our contribution analysis (i.e. thick cases) takes us some way forward in assessing plausible contributions of SPOs to observed changes. In all five cases, we examined in detail the contribution stories and assessed alternative explanations. In three of the cases (ACD, CDD and Aparajeyo) our analysis concluded that contribution of the SPO to the observed change was plausible even when the contribution of other external actors is acknowledged. In some cases, the SPO is forging new areas for development intervention and as a result making important contributions to fashioning future discourse on civil society priorities. In one of our cases (SUPRO) the overall contribution was deemed to be plausible. However given that SUPRO is a platform spread nationally, the contribution is commingled and variable. The

final case of AOSED was challenging because funds were not continued and the project had stopped at the time of evaluation.

The main MDG targets, represented across the spread of SPOs considered under CS strengthening are related to health, gender and governance. The MDG achievements across the **health** themes (4-child mortality, 5-maternal health and 6-reduced vulnerability to disease) indicate a mixed picture nationally. The number of underweight children, under five mortality rates and infant mortality rates have been reduced through successful campaigns for immunization at birth in hospitals. However, child stunting and under nutrition rates remain alarmingly high nationally (reaching 15% and 50% in some regions, respectively). Child stunting, malnutrition and under nutrition vary significantly across regions with strong regional disparities. For example, in the Sylhet division (NE of the country), 51.3% of children suffered from stunting and 39.5% were underweight. Thirty-nine out of 64 districts in Bangladesh have stunting rates above 40%, the World Health Organisation critical threshold level for stunting and 55 districts are above the WHO critical threshold level for underweight which is 30%. This overview leads to the conclusion that the themes under which the SPOs are operating are highly relevant to the country context and speak to challenges which persist and threaten Bangladesh's future development progress. The CIVICUS scores do not allow us to make a judgement on the direct impact on particular MDGs. However those working on health related issues have on average improved their CIVICUS scores in terms of civil society strengthening. This we would argue implies a positive step which will enable future progress in health related MDGs.

As far as the **gender** MDG targets are concerned, recent data indicated that Bangladesh was performing strongly, especially in terms of closing gender gaps at the "bottom" (primary education) and at the "top" (political voice/representation). However since 2012, Bangladesh has not progressed the momentum built up over the past decade or so. Although Bangladesh has reached gender parity in primary education (in fact the gender disparity favours girls!), the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for tertiary education has moved from around 0.30 between 2001 and 2008 to 0.39 in 2010 to 0.66 in 2011 and to 0.73 in 2012. Initiatives such as the 'Asian University for Women' in Chittagong, an increase in the number of scholarship and stipends for girl students, and the opening up of technical and vocational education are all intended to improve GPI. It is generally believed that poverty and hidden costs of tertiary education for girls contribute to ongoing gender disparity. Women's representation in the political sphere appears promising (with women's participation rate in the Parliament increasing from 12.7% in 1991-95 to 18.6% in 2008 and 20.0% in 2014). These rates however must be interpreted in

the context of policy of increasing reserved seats for women (reaching 50 in 2014). The Speaker of the National Parliament, the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition and the Deputy leader of the house are woman.

In the strengthening civil society component, we were able to look closely at MFS II supported interventions to improve gender equality through the Girl Power Project (GPP) implemented by 2 of our 'thick' case study SPOs (ACD and Aparajeyo) and 1 'thin' case study BNWLA. The overall aim of these projects is to reduce gender-based violence (child marriage and domestic violence against young women and girls). The efforts made by the SPOs to build strong linkages with civil society in this challenging area are promising. The supervision of their work and the support provided by Plan International appears to be efficient at creating an intervention that produces relevant outcomes for its beneficiaries. The programme's contribution to gender empowerment at the national scale is difficult to estimate and trace precisely because of all the reasons listed in the previous paragraph. However the civil society strengthening component of the GPP certainly contributes to creating dispersed pockets of activity and a web of progressive communities which are aware of and proactive against child marriage and gender-based violence. The project is effective in addressing underlying socio-cultural factors that make women vulnerable. In many ways, these are 'beacon' projects opening up new space for civil society intervention. As such they are highly relevant. However tackling these kinds of issues and contributing to more impact requires long-term commitment from the SPOs and external funding agencies such as MFSII. In general, the political environment around such issues remains (often) relatively open, so that the challenges faced by NGOs is to make local government representatives more accountable for policies regarding rights of women. This refers in particular to common practices such as child marriage, dowry, and weak legal and social protection in the event of divorce and abandonment.

In various parts of this narrative report, we have referred to the worsening governance situation in Bangladesh. At one level all civil society strengthening can be seen as an attempt to improve governance and the fact that we have high average scores across CIVICUS indicates that the SPO interventions have been effective and their activities are relevant. With SUPRO and ASK we had two cases of SPOs where improved and more accountable **governance** structures were the formal and direct aim of the intervention. Here we found the interventions to be highly relevant, and highly valued by a wide range of external stakeholders as well as by beneficiaries. The relevance of the types of interventions by SPOs like SUPRO and ASK are highly relevant to the broader development agenda (which the MDGs symbolise)

but are increasingly neglected. This reflects our more general observation about the difference between the mobilisation and the intermediation role of SPOs, and the increasing tendency to invest resources and energy in the latter to the detriment of the former. Although these SPOs have achieved different Civicus scorings (ASK +1.2 and SUPRO 0) they are both considered valuable interventions that should be further supported by the MFSII scheme.

### *6.2 Conclusion 2: Linking context to findings and evaluation questions*

Several factors interfere with straight answers to the evaluation and attribution questions which are intrinsic to the programme relationships between CFAs and SPOs partners in the MFS11 phase. These have been: longstanding status of the SPO prior to MFS11 involvement; size and scale of the SPO in relation to either the funding scale or experience of the CFA to provide additionality; the proportion of funding and thus financial dependence of the SPO on its partner CFA in this phase; the maintenance of the funding flow during the period of measurement; turnover among CFA staff which has weakened support relationships and trust; stronger organisational links between the SPO and other donor or 'parent' INGOs rather than with the CFA, with influences therefore attributed to those links; and clashes of perception about issues of probity, corruption and competence. All of these issues limit the plausibility of attribution between inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Nevertheless, the overall picture of the relationship between the CFAs and their partner SPOs during this MFS II period has been broadly positive rather than negative, with a few exceptions. The clearest link would appear to be in relation to the MDG outcomes, though again there is variation in the proportion of funding from CFA to SPO (from 100% to 11%). It also seems clear in the case of the MDGs that the CFA chose wisely in terms of collaboration, even if they were the 'junior' partner (e.g. in relation to Nijera Kori), indicated by design, competence, efficiency and efficacy. The capacity development picture has been clouded by funding suspensions and SPOs with much stronger links elsewhere, or long standing reputations and competences to which little additionality was possible. The picture is still more occluded in civil society strengthening, partly because the linkages between inputs, output activity and outcomes, especially between outputs and outcomes, is intrinsically bound to be a function of the behaviour of other players and stakeholders, but also substantially due to other externalities over which the CFA-SPO relationship has little control. This is where we focus these final remarks, linking the more precise evaluation questions to the wider context of political changes affecting civil society in Bangladesh over this study period drawn from

knowledge outside or beyond the findings arising from the prescribed methodologies of this study.

Perhaps the **first** observation is the MDG 'success' noted above is part of a **wider picture of improvements** across many of the MDGs from 2000 onwards, as noted in the earlier section of this narrative paper under 'relevant country context'. Many in Bangladesh and the development community more widely express surprise at the relative success in the country, despite severe ongoing problems of governance, political disruption, corruption and rent-seeking at all levels in which NGO providers can also be implicated. These results are partly a function of rapid demographic change, entailing urbanisation (now @28% of the population) which has a positive effect upon most income and livelihood indicators. Partly therefore the growth of an educated middle class concerned about overall progress in the society, as a defence of their own more precise interests. Partly a function of relative homogeneity ethnically and religiously, thus reducing 'horizontal' exclusions. Partly a function of poorer people being part of wider kinship and clan groups from whom relief can be expected. Partly a function of both internal and international migration, entailing remittances. Partly a function of a substantial aid presence with some conditionality and enclave forms of management to insulate programmes against excessive domestic rent-seeking. Partly a function of domestic elites wishing to be judged and measured against the more global standards of social policy implied by the aid presence. And thus partly a function of government action as well an intermediation NGOs.

A **second** observation which applies across all 3 components is the **saturation of the civil society landscape in terms of formal organisations**. This is not a comment about the quality or efficacy of civil society in Bangladesh, but about the plethora of organisations large and small across the country. This does not just apply to NGOs, of which there are tens of thousands in the country, but to other civil society entities as well (e.g. professional associations, public sector unions, the media and so on). In this formally observable even measurable sense, one could say that Bangladesh enjoyed strong social capital in the American political science use of the term, to which little can be added by outsiders. Indeed the more thoughtful donors and visiting intellectuals to Bangladesh consider themselves to be learners from Bangladesh rather than contributors to it. This is quite a challenge to the concept of 'contribution analysis'!

**Thirdly**, obviously in a development NGO sense, Bangladesh has been a world leader in the creation and sometimes innovation of these organisations. However only a small fraction of these NGOs receive official donor or INGO funding. Many others are funded through private

charities and foundations often from abroad, with very different standards, objectives and accountability mechanisms. Many are founded by retirees from politics, bureaucracy and business using their own funds and those of friends to lever in dimensions of external support. In some senses the NGOs are privileged in the broader civil society and not trusted nor particularly respected by it. Their reputation abroad can be stronger than at home. So, **strong NGOs do not necessarily lead to strong civil society, and indeed might even weaken it or crowd it out**. There is a clear sovereign argument to that effect within the country. So 'changes' in civil society in the evaluation questions are not about some automatic linear progressive progression.

There is therefore **fourthly** ongoing **contestation within the notion of civil society**, regardless of whether the state, in the form of the ruling party or military, is controlling the space for it. This contestation is presently enriched by the rise of Islamic organisations and movements, not least through the rapid rise of *madrassas*. These are crucial mobilisers of opinion about rights and appropriate cultural reference points for preferred behaviour (e.g. about women) at odds with the more secular narratives of western donor sponsored NGOs (see Wood 2009). This is a significant 'change' in civil society in Bangladesh, between the contested identities of being Bengali or Muslim, a change intensified over the last 2 years of the study period, affecting negatively the space or landscape for the client SPOs of Dutch CFAs, or at least sharpening the 'strengthening' agenda in opposition to an *ummah* and millenarian framing of the idea of civil society.

And **fifthly**, the significant **noise** across the political landscape and thus the conditions for civil society over the two year interval period of this study, described earlier in the 'relevant context' section, overall weakens the explanatory and attribution links between inputs, outputs and outcomes in the extended results chain between MFS11 funding, CFA and SPO partners, and traceable outcomes.

## Table 19: Summary of CIVICUS scoring 2012-2014

| | | Civic Engagement. | Need of target | Participation of target | Dialogue with GoB | Sectoral user group | Level of Organisation | Interest of IOs | Links with relevant org. | Links with networks | Information sharing | Resource base | Practice of Values | Soc. Org. strategic | Soc. Org. IO | Respect of code of | NGO management | IOs' code of conduct | IOs' accountability to | Perception of Impact | Relation public . Sector | Relation private. sector | Target group satisfied | Pub./priv. satisfied | Policy influence | Environment | Defining civil society | Context analysis of CS | Studies on CS | Aggregated differences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACD | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | +0. |
| | 2014 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| ADD | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| | 2014 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | NA | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | |
| AOSED | 2012 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - |
| | 2014 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | NA | 3 | 2 | NA | NA | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0.4 |
| Aparaj- | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| eyo | 2014 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | |
| ASK | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | +1. |
| | 2014 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| BNN | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | - |
| | 2014 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | NA | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.2 |
| BWLA | 2012 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | +0. |
| | 2014 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Caritas | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2014 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | NA | 3 | 2 | NA | NA | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | |
| CDD | 2012 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | +0. |
| | 2014 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| CSS | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | +0. |
| | 2014 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| DSK | 2012 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| | 2014 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | |
| FPAB | 2012 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - |
| | 2014 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.2 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PAB** | **2012** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **0** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **+0.** |
| | **2014** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **3** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **2** |
| **SUPRO** | **2012** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **0** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **0** |
| | **2014** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | |
| **Uttaran** | **2012** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **+0.** |
| | **2014** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** |
| **VARD** | **2012** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **-** |
| | **2014** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **1** | **1** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **3** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **2** | **0.2** |

## REFERENCES


Ali, Z. with Binayak Sen (2009) "Spatial Inequality in Social Progress in Bangladesh", *Bangladesh Development Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2009). *Updating Poverty Maps in Bangladesh.* Available at http://www.bbs.gov.bd/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/UpdatingPovertyMapsofBangladesh.pdf

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2010) *Preliminary Report on Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2010. Dhaka: BSS*

Chowdhury, T and Mukhopadhaya, P. (2011). 'Poverty Alleviation and Service Delivery: Government and Non Government Organizations in Bangladesh', *Oxford Development Studies*, 39 (4), pp 427-452

Devine, J. (2010) 'Social change through NGOs: Ambiguous Struggles and Uncertain Outcomes', in in Khan, Z. and Andaleeb, S. (eds) *Democracy in Bangladesh. Political Dimensions of National Development.* Dhaka: University Press Limited. Dhaka: UPL, pp. 145-161

Devine, J. (2006) 'NGOs, Politics and Grassroots Mobilisation: Evidence from Bangladesh.' *Journal of South Asian Development*. Vol.1 (1), pp.77-101.

Devine, J. (2003) 'The Paradox of Sustainability: Reflections on NGOs in Bangladesh. *Annals of the American Academy of Political And Social Science* 590, November 2003, pp 227 – 24

DFID (2011) *Operational Plan 2011-2015 DFID Bangladesh.* Available http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/Bangladesh-2011.pdf

FAO, WFP and IFAD. 2012. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012. Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to accelerate reduction of hunger and malnutrition.* Rome, FAO.

Government of Bangladesh /UNDP A (2009) *Situation Analysis Report on Health (MDG 4,5,6) Bangladesh. A Baseline for Needs Assessment and Costing*. Dhaka: Government of Bangladesh. Available at http://www.undp.org.bd/projects/prodocs/PRS_MDG/Situation%20analysis_health.pdf

Government of Bangladesh (2010) *Bangladesh Maternal Mortality and Health Care Survey 2010: Summary of Key Findings and Implications*. Available at http://www.heritage.org/index/country/bangladesh

Heritage Foundation (2012) *Index of Economic Freedom*. Available at http://www.heritage.org/index/default

IFPRI (2011). 2011 Global Hunger Index. Available at http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/ghi11.pdf

IPPC (2007). *Climate Change 2007.* Available at http://www.ipcc.ch/

North D., J.J.Wallis and B.R. Weingast (2009) *Violence and Social Orders* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

UNDP (2011) *Human Development Report Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All.* Available at http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/download/

UNDP (2013) *Human Development Report The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*, New York: UNDP

UNDP (2014) *Human Development Report. Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerability and Building Resilience*, New York: UNDP

Wood G.D. (1997) 'States without Citizens: the problem of the Franchise State' in M.Edwards and D.Hulme (Eds) *Too Close for Comfort: NGOs and the State*, MacMillan

Wood G.D. (2000) 'Prisoners and Escapees: Improving the Institutional Responsibility Square in Bangladesh' *Journal of Public Administration and Development* 20, July 221-237

Wood G.D. (2009) 'Clashing Values in Bangladesh: NGOs, Secularism and the Umma' Chapter 3 in F.C.Khan, A.Ahmad and M.Quddus (Eds) *Recreating the Commons? NGOs in Bangladesh* Dhaka: UPL pp 43-78

Wood G.D. (2011) 'Can the Escapees be Sprung from Jail? Reflections of a Prison Visitor' *IGS-BRAC CDS-Bath Governance Conference* Dhaka November

Wood G.D. (2012) 'Can Civil Society be Free of the Natural State? Applying North to Bangladesh', presented to conference on '*Civil Society in Bangladesh*', University of Tsukuba, Japan 20-21 February 2012

Wood G.D. (2014) 'Deconstructing the Natural State? Is there room for De Tocqueville or only Gramsci in Bangladesh' Presented to Conference on '*Political Economy, Accountability and Governance*' BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2014

World Bank/IFC (2015) *Doing Business. Going Beyond Efficiency.* Available at http://www.doingbusiness.org/~/media/GIAWB/Doing%20Business/Documents/Annual-Reports/English/DB15-Chapters/DB15-Report-Overview.pdf

World Bank/IFC (2012) *Doing Business in a more transparent world. Economic Profile: Bangladesh.* Available at

http://doingbusiness.org/~/media/fpdkm/doing%20business/documents/profiles/country/BGD.pdf

World Food Programme et al (2009) *Bangladesh Household Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Report 2009.* Available at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/45A7AA9D78935463C125774B00452438-Full_Report.pdf